GAZETTEER OF INDIA

WEST BENGAL

BĪRBHŪM

WEST BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

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By

DURGADAS MAJUMDAR, I.A.S. (retd.),

former State Editor

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PREFACE

The present volume is the sixth in the series of West Bengal District Gazetteers now being written according to a scheme jointly sponsored by the Government of India and West Bengal Government. The former Gazetteer for Birbhum was published by L. S. S. O'Malley in 1910. The plan followed in this volume was laid down by the Government of India, keeping in view the progress and achievements of the people since Independence as well as the numerous socio-economic changes that had taken place since 1910.

The preliminary drafts of most of the chapters were prepared by Dr. Sankarananda Mukerji, Shri Pranabranjan Roy and Shri Satyaranjan Sengupta, Assistant Editors and Shri Kiransanker Sengupta, Research Officer (all of whom are still in this office) as well as Shri Nirendra Nath Sen, Dr. Saugata Prasad Mukherjee, Dr. Ramendra Narayan Nag and Shri Biswatosh Chatterjee (who are no longer here). Shri Durgadas Majumdar, I.A.S., State Editor (June 1970 to November 1972), revised all those drafts and himself wrote a few chapters as well. He submitted the draft Gazetteer to the Central Gazetteers Unit for scrutiny as also got it examined by the State Advisory Committee. In due course he sent the finished writing to the press in the latter part of 1972. Shri Abani Mohan Kusari, I.A.S. (Retd.), State Editor (December 1973 to December 1974), procured some excellent photographs for inclusion in the volume. My own contribution amounts to little more than writing this preface. I offer profuse thanks to my predecessors in office as well as the officers, past and present, who had participated in the drafting of the volume.

I am indebted to Shri B. Sarkar, I.C.S. (Retd.), Chairman, as well Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D., and Dr. P. C. Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., members of the Advisory Committee, for the immense pains taken by them in examining the draft and making many valuable suggestions. I must also thank Shri D. K. Guha, I.A.S., Education Commissioner & Secretary, Education Department, Government of West Bengal, for his help and cooperation in various ways.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my deep gratitude to Dr. P. N. Chopra, M.A., Ph.D., Editor, District Gazetteers and the staff of the Central Gazetteers Unit, Union Ministry of Education, New Delhi, for their effective role in planning and coordinating the work of preparation of the District Gazetteers. The Unit scrutinised the draft of this volume with great care and made several helpful suggestions with a view to improving

the standard and quality of the publication. Indeed, the personal interest taken by Dr. Chopra is a source of inspiration to us. It may also be mentioned that a portion of the expenditure incurred on the compilation and printing of the District Gazetteers is being met by the Government of India.

Many departments of the State and Central Governments and branches of the district administration rendered valuable assistance by supplying data incorporated in this volume. I also express my sincere thanks to Visva-Bharati for the pictures connected with Santiniketan, to the Directorate of Information & Public Relations, Government of West Bengal for the picture of Tilpara Barrage, and to the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal for the pictures of temples and temple decorations.

The maps included in the volume have been prepared by Shri Dilip Kumar Khan, M.A. Shri Tarapada Maity, Research Assistant has prepared the bibliography and the index. The other Research Assistants as well as the Publication Assistant, the Proof Reader, the Stenographers, the Typists, the Comparers, and — last but not least — the Head Assistant, also contributed to the preparation and printing of this volume, and my entire staff deserve praise and thanks for their competent team work.

Our printers, Messrs N. K. Gossain & Co. (P) Limited, have taken considerable time in making the work see the light of day. They may have had their own difficulties, including load shedding, and I am grateful for their over-all performance.

BIRENDRA KUMAR BHATTACHARYA
State Editor

Calcutta,
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CHAPTER I

GENERAL & PHYSICAL ASPECTS

INTRODUCTORY

Origin of the name of the district

There are several theories on the origin of the name of the district. In the Pandit's *Chronicle of Beerbhoom* as noted in Appendix D to W. W. Hunter's *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, there is mention how once the Raja of Bishenpur while going in pursuit of herons with the help of hawks in the hilly district of his kingdom witnessed an unusual spectacle of a hawk being pursued by a heron with great fury and ultimately the latter coming off victorious. This incident led the Raja to ascribe some mysterious quality to the soil. He thought it was *Virmati* (i.e. vigorous soil) and whatever is brought forth by that soil would be endowed with heroic courage and power. Hence the Raja named this tract of land as *Virbhumi*. Hunter, however, thinks that Birbhum derived its name from the Santali word *Bir* meaning jungle in which the tract abounded in early days. In the introduction to *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, Hunter writes: 'This well-watered land, rich in noble scenery, and enjoying during five months of the year an exquisite climate, formed the theatre of one of the primitive struggles of Indian history. It stood as the outpost of the Sanskrit race on the west of lower Bengal, and had to bear the sharp collisions of Aryan civilisation with the ruder types prevailing among the aborigines. On its inhabitants devolved, during three thousand years, the duty of holding the passes between the highlands and the valley of the Ganges. To this day they are a manlier race than their kinsmen of the plains, and from the beginning of history one of the two kingdoms has borne the name of the Malla-bhumi, the country of the Wrestlers,— the other the appellation of Vir-bhumi, the Hero Land.'

From historical records it is fairly clear that the district included in Rarh was mainly under different Hindu rulers. But it was also under Muhammedan sway at different periods of history. For many centuries, however, the Muslim rule in this district was nominal and the real rulers had been the Hindu chiefs called *Bir Rajas*. *Bir* was the title borne by the Hindu chiefs who ruled the district just as *Man*, *Singh* and *Dhal* were the titles of the chiefs of Manbhum, Singhbhum and Dhalbhum respectively. It is quite possible, therefore, that the district was named 'Birbhum' to indicate simply the territory of the *Bir Rajas*.

Location, shape & General boundaries

Birbhum is the northernmost district of the Burdwan Division. It lies between 23°32′30″ and 24°35′00″ north latitude and 88°01′40″ and 87°05′25″ east longitude.[1] In shape it looks like an isosceles triangle. The apex is situated at the northern extremity not far south of the point where the Ganges and the hills of the Santal Parganas of Bihar begin to diverge while the river Ajay forms the base of this triangle. Birbhum is bounded on the north and west by the Santal Parganas, on the east by the districts of Murshidabad and Burdwan, and on the south by Burdwan, from which it is separated by the Ajay river. Thus only the southern boundary is a natural one. In early days when Santal Parganas was a part of Birbhum the western boundary was more natural and geographically the district comprised a complete natural region.

Total area and population of the district

Extending over an area of 1,757.12 square miles (4,550.94 sq.km.) the district was inhabited by 17,79,805 persons, of which 9,03,118 were males and 8,76,687 females according to the Census of 1971. In terms of population it ranks eleventh among the districts of West Bengal with 4.01 per cent of the State's population.[2] In terms of area it holds the ninth place comprising 5.10 per cent of the State's area. Only the districts of Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly and Nadia have a higher population load with smaller area than Birbhum.

The statements below indicate the changes in the number of inhabited villages during 1901 and 1961 and the area and population density of police stations in 1961.

Year	No. of inhabited villages	Area in sq. miles
1901	3,317	1,752.0
1911	2,216	1,752.0
1921	2,299	1,753.0
1931	2,402	1,699.0
1941	2,211	1,743.0
1951	2,207	1,742.9
1961	2,234	(a) 1,757.12
		(b) 1,743.0

"The variations over sixty years are largely due to changes in number of *mauzas* by Settlement Operations, changes in number

1 Source: Director, Map Publication, Dehra Dun. In 1910 the district extended between 23°35′ and 24°35′ north latitude and between 87°10′ and 88°2′ east longitude. (Vide L. S. S. O'Malley — Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. p. 1.)

2 Provisional figures 1971 Census.

(a) According to the Surveyor General of India.

(b) According to computation made in the Census Office from the last published Jurisdiction Lists.

of uninhabited *mauzas* and absorption of rural *mauzas* by towns."[1] The district is predominantly rural. Out of the total population of 17,79,805 according to the Census of 1971, only 1,25,238 were urban dwellers. Though the urban population was only 7.04 per cent, its growth rate of 24.28 was slightly higher than the growth rate of the rural population which was 22.98 during the decade 1961-71.

AREA OF POLICE STATIONS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT & POPULATION DENSITY

	Sq. miles	Sq. Kilometres	Density per sq. mile
SADAR SUBDIVISION	1,136.9	2,944.6	760
Suri P.S.	113.1	292.9	932
Rajnagar P.S.	85.2	220.7	493
Mahammad Bazar P.S.	121.0	313.4	548
Sainthia P.S.	120.1	311.1	872
Dubrajpur P.S.	138.8	359.5	704
Khayrasol P.S.	105.6	273.5	731
Ilambazar P.S.	100.2	259.5	687
Bolpur P.S.	128.8	333.6	869
Labhpur P.S.	104.7	271.2	875
Nanur P.S.	119.4	309.2	825
RAMPURHAT SUBDIVISION	606.1	1,569.8	960
Mayureswar P.S.	147.1	381.0	872
Rampurhat P.S.	182.4	472.4	955
Nalhati P.S.	138.8	359.5	1,009
Murarai P.S.	137.8	356.9	1,011

The history of the district as an administrative unit and the changes in its component parts

Birbhum was formerly held as a military fief by the Pathan Rajas to guard the plains of Bengal against the hill tribes of Chotanagpur. 'This district', wrote Mr. I. Grant, Chief Sarishtadar of Bengal, in 1786, 'was held by a tenure different to any other known in the country. In some respects it corresponded with the ancient military fiefs of Europe, inasmuch as certain lands were held *lakhiraj* or exempted from the payment of rent, and solely appropriated for the maintenance of troops.' Elsewhere he writes:— 'Birbhum, with all its ascertained dimensions from the

1 B. Ray — Census 1961, West Bengal District Census Handbook: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1966. p. 5.
(a) According to the Surveyor General of India.
(b) According to computation made in the Census Office from the last published jurisdiction Lists.

year 1760, contains, according to the Rennell, 3,858 British square miles, and is the fourth in magnitude of all the single zamindaris of Bengal, being, next to Burdwan, in superficial measures the most extensive.'[1] These 3,858 square miles comprised a large area outside the present district, viz. the whole of the Deoghar subdivision and other parts of the Santal Parganas.[2]

During this period the Company managed its business in two distinct systems: by covenanted servants who received regular pay, and invested the money entrusted to them without making any private profit, and by unsalaried agents, who contracted to supply goods at a certain rate, and might make what they could in the bargain. The first class bore the titles of residents, senior merchants, junior merchants, factors, and sub-factors. Their posts formed the most lucrative in the Company's gift, and attracted its best men. Even after the grant of Diwani in 1765, the Company continued this system of double administration till 1769, when English Supervisors were appointed to each of the great divisions of the province.

The duties of a supervisor were to make minute local investigations and to gather as much information regarding revenue matters as possible. To start with, the Supervisors were under the immediate control of the Resident at Murshidabad. Under the administrative changes adopted in July 1770, they came under the supervision of the Controlling Council of Revenue at Murshidabad.[3] This marked the first phase of a transition from a mere trading body to that of a high administrative organization. In 1772 the Supravisors, employed in the management of the collection of revenue, were first styled as 'Collectors'.

In the correspondences of the 'Committee of Revenue' which began on 13th October 1772 and held its last meeting on 23rd November 1773, there is mention of Birbhum Collectorship with Pachet and Vishnupur. Separate Collectors were appointed for Pachet and Vishnupur by an order dated 19th January 1773, but they were recalled by another order of the Committee of Revenue dated 28th May 1773 and the revenue farmers were permitted to pay their revenues at Calcutta.

In a letter to the Governor-General dated 21st September 1785, the Court of Directors remarked that frequent innovations were attended with much inconvenience and avoidable expense and that it was time to adopt a settled plan. They, accordingly, directed that a Board of Revenue be formed to which should belong the work of the whole administration, settlement, collection

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1 L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. p. 83.
2 ibid. p. 84.
3 From 1765 to 1787 Birbhum was administered from Murshidabad.

and receipt of every kind of revenue together with the control of the officers concerned. Thus, the Committee of Revenue was replaced in 1786 by the 'Board of Revenue'. To this Board of Revenue the Governor-General Cornwallis, addressed a letter on 5th February 1787, urging that revenue matters be settled in a way which would be of mutual advantage to the Government as also the inhabitants of the land. He recommended that special care should be taken to ensure that zamindaries remained undivided under one authority and, secondly, while settling several parganas into a Collectorship their contiguity should be considered. On the basis of these recommendations, John Shore submitted his well-known plan to the Board of Revenue on the 13th March 1787, under which the different establishments for the collection of revenue were brought down to 24.

These changes affected Birbhum in the following manner. It appears that some time prior to 1785, Vishnupur and Birbhum had been included within the district of Murshidabad. On 18th April 1786, the Committee of Revenue determined to form two separate collectorships for Birbhum and Vishnupur and accordingly Foley was placed in charge of Birbhum and Pye in charge of Vishnupur. But with the implementation of Shore's Plan, Vishnupur and Birbhum were united into a compact district according to a notification published in the Calcutta Gazette in March 1787. Bankura continued to form one district with Birbhum until 1793 when it was transferred to the Burdwan Collectorate. In a letter of October 8, 1793, the Collector of Birbhum informed the Secretary to the Board of Revenue that Vishnupur had already been separated from Birbhum and annexed to the 'Zilla Burdwan'.[1]

Just before the Permanent Settlement, Vishnupur was transferred to Burdwan (1793). Under Governor General's order dated 27th October 1793, 250 villages were transferred from Murshidabad to Birbhum for administrative convenience. A few years later the zamindari of Patkum, Sarhat and Deoghar were added to Birbhum. The area of Birbhum according to quinquennial register of 1799 comprised 669 sq. miles. This was exclusive of parganas Sarhat and Deoghar which extended over 1,114 sq. miles.

In 1793 Birbhum constituted of 26 parganas divided into 10 thanas, Afzalpur (now Khayrasol), Soorie, Nangilia (now Rajnagar), Kissennagar, Kusbah, Labhpur, Mayureswar, Deoghar, Uparbandha and Shapara. In 1799 Pachet and Jhalda were transferred from Ramgarh zila. This was done due to the contumacy of the old zamindars and the raids of Chuars in 1795-98. Sixteen Jungle Mahals, Pachet, Begmundy, Bogan,

1 A Mitra (Ed.)—West Bengal District Records: New Series. Calcutta, 1954. p. 44.

Kaoden, taraf Bahapur, Katlas, Habila, Jhalda, Jharria, Jayapur, Mukundapur, kismat Nawagarh, Kismat Chaontly, Taorang, Tong, Nagarkiari and Patkum were transferred from Birbhum to the new district of Jungle Mahal under regulation XVIII of 1805 as a consequence of the violent disturbances in the area and the raids of Chuars on settled tracts.

River Ajay was made the southern boundary of the district on 9th October 1806. But under orders dated 1st October 1806, the Mahal Panra was transferred to Jungle Mahal. Under regulation I of 1806 the part of Murshidabad west of the Bhagirathi comprising six thanas, Shakulipore, Panchtopee (now Burwan), Doongram, Palsa, Nalhati and Kahrun was transferred to Birbhum. Under the same regulation thana Ketugram was transferred from Burdwan to Birbhum.

In 1809 Birbhum Collectorate was abolished and it was administered from Murshidabad again, an Assistant Collector remaining in charge at Suri. Revenue collections of Vishnupur and Jungle Mahal were transferred to Burdwan under an Assistant Collector at Bankura. This was done for the reduction of expenditure. In the same year the greater part of Murshidabad was transferred to Birbhum Judge. In 1820 again, Birbhum of 1809 with the exception of a few estates which were transferred to the Jungle Mahal, was recreated a separate Collectorship.[1] Pressure of heavy work and public inconveniences were the main cause behind it. In 1834 Palsa was retransferred to Murshidabad but Bharatpur was included in Birbhum. In 1839 Palsa again came back to Birbhum. Three thanas; Ukrah, Churulia and Sanipahari; were transferred in 1838 from Bankura to Birbhum. In 1846-47 these three thanas reverted to Bankura.

In 1842 the post of the Collector and Magistrate was abolished and a Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector was placed in charge of Birbhum because of lack of work. Before 1853 a separate Magistrate, Collector and Judge was appointed. In 1854 thana Bharatpur was transferred to Murshidabad.

At the time of the Revenue Survey during 1849-52 the district covered 37 parganas with a total area of approximately 3,142 sq. miles. After the Santal Rebellion in 1855 the upland tracts to the west which had been a rallying point for the rebels were transferred to the newly constituted district of Santal Parganas. Thus four *Parganas* Sarhat Deoghar, Pubbia, Kundapit Karayea, Muhammadabad and part of the fifth, Darin Mouleswar were detached from Birbhum and the area of Birbhum was reduced to 1,344 sq. miles. In 1856 offices of Magistrate and Collector were amalgamated. In 1859 thana Ketugram was retransferred

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1 L. S. S. O'Malley—op. cit. p. 27.

to Burdwan. In 1872 thanas Rampurhat, Nalhati and Palsa were transferred to Murshidabad (leaving Birbhum with only 8 police stations) but returned to Birbhum in 1879, in which year thana Burdwan with an area of 108 square miles was transferred to Murshidabad. In 1881 the area of the district was, 1,756 sq. miles. Thus in 1901 the district comprised nine police stations, five, viz. Suri, Dubrajpur, Bolpur, Sakulipur and Labhpur under Sadar subdivision and four, viz. Rampurhat, Nalhati, Murarai and Mayureswar under Rampurhat subdivision. There was no change during the next decade. But during 1911-21, Suri police station was divided into four police stations, viz. Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Rajnagar and Sainthia ; Dubrajpur was divided into three, viz. Dubrajpur, Khayrasol and Shahapur ; and Bolpur also was divided into three police stations, viz. Bolpur, Ilambazar and Ahmadpur. Nanur was designated as a police station in place of Sakulipur. In course of the next decade of 1921-31, Ahmadpur and Sainthia were merged as one police station of Sainthia. Similar is the case of Dubrajpur and Shahpur. Since 1931 the district has only fourteen police stations.[1]

Subdivisions and thanas

"The district comprises two subdivisions namely, Sadar and Rampurhat. Suri is the headquarters of the district and of the Sadar Subdivision as well. Rampurhat town is the headquarters of the only outlying subdivision. The sadar subdivision is constituted of ten police stations namely, Suri, Rajnagar, Muhammad Bazar, Sainthia, Dubrajpur, Khayrasole, Ilambazar, Bolpur, Labhpur and Nanur. The Rampurhat subdivision covers the police stations of Mayureshwar, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Murarai.

"The district has six towns, three administered by the Boards of Municipal Commissioners and the other three are non-Municipal urban areas. The Sadar subdivision has two municipal towns, Suri and Bolpur and two non-municipal towns of Sainthia and Dubrajpur. The Rampurhat subdivision has one municipal town of Rampurhat and the other non-municipal town of Nalhati. Nalhati town has been declared as an urban area for the first time in 1961 Census.

"In the district the total number of *mauzas* borne in the Jurisdiction Lists is 2,486, of which 239 are uninhabited. The total number of inhabited *mauzas* is 2,234, and a number of 13 *mauzas* are included fully in the urban areas of the district."[2]

TOPOGRAPHY

Birbhum is a part of the Rarh area ; the soil and landscape is very much akin to the Rarh areas of Murshidabad, Burdwan,

1 ibid. p. 27.
2 ibid. p. 5.

General configuration

Bankura and Midnapur. The western portions comprising Khayrasol, Rajnagar, Dubrajpur, Suri, Mahammad Bazar and Rampurhat thanas are at the base of the heavily dissected plateau of Santal Parganas projecting south-southeast. Proceeding eastward the projecting spurs become mere undulations. The highlands to the west are located on the hard impervious crystalline rocks (Archaeans), while the rest is made up of the Gondwana sediments, the Tertiaries, the laterites (both primary and detrital) and the alluvium. The Gondwanas and the Tertiaries probably extend below the detrital laterites and the alluvium. These sedimentaries in their turn are underlain by basic lava flows some outcrops of which are found in the Nalhati thana. Throughout almost the entire area of the district the surface is broken by a succession of undulations, the general trend of which is from north-west to south-east. Near the western boundary they rise into high ridges capped by laterite and separated by valleys a mile or more in width. These ridges are actually spurs but appear like sea-cliffs. To the south-east these upland ridges and their ramifications fade out, the valleys become shallow, and gradually merge into the broad alluvial plains of the Gangetic delta. The larger spurs are covered with stunted *sal* forest, only the bottoms of the valleys being cultivated. As they become less steep, rice is grown in terraces up the sides, and only the broad, flat, and usually dry summits are left untilled, forming in the rains scanty pasture grounds. The minor undulations are terraced up to the top.

The rapidity with which hillocks change to ridges, ridges to ramified undulations, and undulations to level country varies considerably. In the extreme north of the Rampurhat subdivision the ridges are high and amount almost to hills. Being extensions of the low Rajmahal hills these hillocks are of basaltic formation. They cease abruptly, and throughout the greater part of the Nalhati and Rampurhat thanas the surface, almost from the foot of the Chotanagpur plateau is only slightly hummocky. The unbroken deltaic plain is not, however, met with till beyond the eastern boundary of the district. In the Nalhati thana there are a few detached hillocks such as Seurapahari, Nanchpahari, Kantapahari and Kangalpahari. The western portions of the Mahammad Bazar and Suri thanas are covered with high spurs extending many miles to the south-east, but whereas in the northern part of this tract they are succeeded at once by perfectly level ground, on the south of the valley of the Mayurakshi they sink into undulations, and, after nearly disappearing, rise again to the dimensions of low hillocks. The ridges on the south bank of the Mayurakshi pass into flat country east of Suri, but swell into well-raised uplands near Sainthia. Further east the

undulations extend beyond the railway line some miles east of Labhpur, and even south of Bolpur, where the railway line runs through a deep cutting of laterite rock. The Tertiary and Pleistocene deposits are mostly covered by a variable thickness of laterite which even envelopes some portions of the peneplained and highly weathered gneissic terrain to the west. Along the north of the Ajay, to the south of Labhpur and Bolpur, the country is absolutely flat. The hollows between the ridges form natural drainage channels, which in the wider valleys are streams of considerable volume and in a few cases expand into broad rivers, which even within Birbhum have a small and shallow current throughout the greater part of the year.[1]

Variations in sea-level and lines of natural drainage

To the north of 20° 20'N. in the Murarai thana the land slopes north-northeast as is evident from the flow of the Pagla Nadi and its tributary the Suri Nadi. Further north the Bansloi Nadi also flows north-northeast. This direction of slope is in marked contrast to the east-southeasterly flowing streams of Birbhum. The Gamri-Pagla interfluve is the divide from where this change of slope occurs. This divide itself has no noticeable relief. As is evident from the meandering bed of the Pagla, the slope is very gentle. These north-east flowing streams give off numerous spill channels as soon as they enter Murshidabad district and has formed within Birbhum several swamps. The highest point in Murarai is only 232 feet at Dhuria Pahar, the site of Rajgan Stone Works (24° 33'N. and 87° 49'E.). In Nalhati the highest point is 263 feet (24°19'N. and 87°47'E.) near the State border. The general slope of the Rampurhat thana is from west to east dominated by the east flowing left bank tributaries of the Dwaraka. The slope of Mayureswar thana above 24°N. latitude is northerly and south of it easterly. These two different slope directions begin from the Mahammad Bazar thana where the Dwaraka takes a north easterly bend and the Mayurakshi throws off a distributary, the Manikarnika. The interfluve between these two master streams is only 3 to 4 miles broad at a point and is dominated by the 150 feet contour line. To the east of the E.I.R. Loop line and extreme south west of the Mayureswar thana, existence of large water bodies and the Manikarnika distributary point to the flatness of this interfluve.

To the south the Ajay dominates the landscape with its shoals and sandy bed — miles wide at places. The Ajay enters the district at about 300 feet (87°08'E. & 23°46'N.) and leaves at 75 feet (87°57'30"E. & 23°37'30"N.). The Ajay is also the limit of the forest belt which stretches across Burdwan. From Jaydeb Kenduli on the left bank of the Ajay the scenery is extremely

1 L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. pp. 2-3.

picturesque. To the north lies the cultivated lands studded with tanks and to the south the dry river bed, the embankments and a dense *sal* jungle. There is a linear pattern of settlement on the left bank. In contrast, settlements, except where protected by embankments, avoid the vicinity of the right banks in Burdwan district.

The rolling upland topography in between Mayurakshi and the Ajay is known for its splendour and picturesque variety. The general gradient is from north-west to south-east. However, the Sal which downstream is known as the Kopai river flows from north-northwest to east-southeast and after crossing the 250 ft. contour line, flows west-northwest to east-southeast. The Bakreswar and the Chandrabhaga Nalas describe similar courses after crossing the 200 ft. contour line. It is interesting that the Andal-Sainthia Chord line runs along the tract where this change in the direction of slope occurs. The Mayurakshi describes a perennial channel only after it descends below the 200 feet contour line but becomes dry again between 87°45′ & 87°55′ E. The Kopai meanders in a semi-circle from west-northwest to east-southeast and finally to north-east from 23°41′ N. and 87°37′30″ E. From this point the right bank tributaries of the Kopai display severe scars of gully erosion. This has resulted in the badland topography to the north of Binuria, Sri Niketan, Surul, Santiniketan and Makarampur. Very interestingly, the badland topography in this part does not extend below the 150 feet contour and the banks of the Kopai itself is free from the ravages of gully erosion.

In between the Ahmadpur-Katwa Railway line below Labhpur and the Bakreswar, there has been extensive gully erosion by tributaries of the Bakreswar, very similar to those found above Santiniketan. The combined streams of the Bakreswar and the Kopai is called the Koiya Nala. The Koiya is perennial, whereas the Mayurakshi though a larger stream is non-perennial in the same longitudinal belt. The distributaries of the Mayurakshi take off from the left bank and flow parallel to the mother stream in Birbhum district. The Koiya gives off a distributary, the Kandar Nala from its right bank. It flows parallel to the Koiya and joins it again through the swamps near the district border.

The Mayurakshi leaves the district just after it crosses the 100 feet contour but enters the district at about 228 feet. Starting from this point the old wall of Nagar runs for about 23 miles within Birbhum and extends for another couple of miles into the Santal Parganas district. Fortified by this wall and encircled by hummocky terrain, Rajnagar commanded a very strategic location. The wall runs from north (24°01′ N. & 87°23′30″ E. on the district boundary) to south (23°51′N. & 87°24′ E.) for about 12 miles almost parallel to the 87°25′ E. meridian and then takes a

sharp turn to the north-west enclosing the Bakreswar Nala and running almost parallel to it along its right bank. With Rajnagar at the centre, river valleys radiate in all directions except the north-west where the high plateau provided a natural fortification. To the north of 24°0′ N. the east flowing Nunbil Nala (the Singra river according to D.L.R.'s map) meets the north flowing Siddheswari Nala at 320 feet which flows due east through the Dumka subdivision to debouch into the Mayurakshi at a height of 244 feet. It is also the debouching point of the Phatik Nala, a small stream of about 9 miles length flowing north-east. The highest point in the district is reached in the Nunbil-Siddheswari interfluve where the summit of a hillock measures 518 feet. The Kandar Nala (downstream the Phuskani Nala) flowing past Rajnagar is an east flowing tributary of the Mayurakshi. As has already been described the Bakreswar Valley provided a route towards south-southeast.

RIVER SYSTEM & WATER RESOURCES

The district is well drained by a number of rivers and plateau streams running in nearly every case from west to east with a slight southeasterly inclination in the Suri subdivision and a north-easterly inclination in the eastern half of the Rampurhat subdivision. Only two are rivers of any magnitude, viz. the Mayurakshi and the Ajay. The latter marks the southern boundary; and the Mayurakshi runs through Birbhum from west to east. Both river valleys are of considerable size when they enter the district, their width varying according to the configuration of the country, from two hundred yards to half a mile. The cross section of the valley floors is broader upstream, i.e. to the west. In the dry weather their beds are broad expanses of sand with narrow streams trickling down in meanders, but during the rainy season the water channels grow much broader and deeper, and after a heavy downpour in a few hours, occasionally overflow their banks downstream (where valley floors are narrow) and inundate the surrounding country. O'Malley wrote, "With the exception of these two waterways (i.e. the Ajay and the Mayurakshi) none of the rivers are used for navigation. Between the bigger rivers are innumerable drainage channels known by the generic name of Kandar, of which the Chilla and the Ghoramara are of an appreciable size. In the western part of the district the rivers, being fenced in by high ridges or well-marked undulations of stiff laterite, keep fairly well within their permanent channels. Further eastward, however, where the country is level and the soil friable, exemplifications of the usual meandering of Indian rivers are to be found."[1]

Main rivers and tributaries

The Ajay

The Ajay rising in the Chotanagpur hills of Bihar first touches

1 L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. p. 3.

the district at its south-west corner, and follows a winding course in an easterly direction, forming the district boundary. After receiving the Kunur Nala from the right bank and taking a north-easterly bend north of Mangalkot (in Burdwan) at the extreme southeastern angle of Birbhum, it enters Burdwan eventually falling into the Bhagirathi near Katwa. The total length of the Ajay in this district is about 76 miles (121.6 km.). In this portion of its course it is navigable for small boats during the rains. The river has a very broad channel in its upper course. In Khayrasol and Dubrajpur police stations the width at places is almost a mile. There are some five miles of left bank embankments in Khayrasol thana. From the confluence with the Hingla at an altitude of 230 feet in the Dubrajpur police station the Ajay turns south-easterly till it receives Fumuni Nala from the right at an altitude of 184 feet just below Jaydeb Kenduli. From this point the river valley becomes narrow and from 87°30′ E. longitude the flow becomes easterly again. To the east of Eastern Railway Loop Line the valley floor becomes narrow and the banks display features of gully erosion. A Kana Nala and a Kandar Khal with an intricate network are part of the Ajay system in Bolpur and Nanur thanas. The Ajay leaves the district at an altitude of 75 feet. Thus the total fall in the long profile of the valley is about 225 feet in 76 miles; but the gradient is not an even one. Its floods sometimes destroy the villages and crops on its left bank, along which are some embankments with a total length of about 9 miles in the Bolpur and Nanur thanas. Its right bank embankments in the Burdwan district are however far more extensive.

The Mayurakshi

The Mayurakshi enters Birbhum from the Santal Parganas a little north of the village of Haripur Jambandi (23°59′ N. & 87°27′ E.) at a height of 228 feet and flows through the centre of the district from west to east, passing two miles north of Suri and forming the southern boundary of the Rampurhat subdivision. It leaves the district at an altitude of 99 feet, a little east of Ganutia (87°50′ E. & 23°52′30″ N.) and joins the Dwaraka, which is itself a tributary of the Bhagirathi. As only descending boats can ply on this river, small canoes are built on its banks and floated down during freshets, but are unable to return owing to the velocity of the current. The Mayurakshi is perennial only in its downstream course and its fall is about 129 feet in 30 miles within this district.

It is interesting to note that all the distributaries of the Mayurakshi take off from the left bank. The river is also called the Morakhi or Mor, a corruption of Mayurakshi 'the peacock-eyed', i.e. having water as lustrous as the eye of a peacock. In the eastern portion of its course it gives off distributaries known as the Kana and the Manikarnika Nalas.

The Hingla

The Hingla coming from the Santal Parganas enters Khayrasol thana some eight miles north of the Ajay, and gradually approaching that river, unites with it at Chapla in Dubrajpur thana, after a course in Birbhum of about fifteen miles. The greater part of this tract is drained by series of small streams, which rise within the district, and, gradually converging from the numerous vales into which the country is here longitudinally divided, fall into the Bakreswar. The latter rises from south of Rajnagar a few miles north-west of the hot springs of the same name (87°22′30″ E. & 23°52°50′ N.) some ten miles west of Suri, and after following a zigzag course eastwards, and receiving one by one the waters of almost all the rivulets of south Birbhum, joins the Mayurakshi as the Koiya Nala a few miles beyond the eastern boundary of the district. The Bakreswar and the Kopai meet at a height of 92 feet below Labhpur. The first eight miles of the long profile of the combined stream, the Koiya Nala, has some gradient but becomes absolutely flat just before it enters the Kandi subdivision forming large swamps.

The Bakreswar & the Kopai

The Brahmani

The Brahmani is a river of the same type as the Mayurakshi but on a smaller scale. It enters the district at Narayanpur (24°15′20″ N. & 87°38′25″ E.), bisects the Rampurhat subdivision, and passing under the railway two miles south of Nalhati falls into the Dwaraka in the Murshidabad district. Numerous partially ruined settlements such as Kaitha (87°55′ E. & 24°17′30″ N.), Bujang (87°55′ E. & 24°15′ N.), Bhadrapur (87°57′ E. & 24°15′30″ N.), Lohapur (87°58′20″ E. & 24°17′30″ N.), Bara (24°19′ N. & 87°58′ E.) etc. form an important feature of the cultural landscape of the Brahmani basin. On the right bank of the Brahmani stands the now deserted villages Narayanpur (24°14′ N. & 87°42′ E.) and Balia (24°13′ N. & 87°43′ E.) which were once famous for iron smelting. The Tripita Nala flows east from the Santal Parganas, enters the district at 87°44′ E. & 24°17′30″ N., becomes perennial east of 87°45′ E. and joins the Brahmani as left bank tributary at 87°50′ E. & 24°17′ N. At about 87°52′ E. & 87°55′ E. and about the same latitude, viz. 24°17′15″ N. there are two abandoned channels of the Brahmani flowing south-east. The present channel also takes a southerly bend from 24°15′ N. and 87°57′ E. Banks of all the three courses have been heavily eroded. The Gamri Nala, a perennial stream, rises from within the district (87°50′ E. & 24°21′ N.) and flows due east in a meandering channel and finally describes the district boundary with the Lalbagh subdivision of Murshidabad district. The Eastern Railway Azimganj Branch Line is on the Gamri-Brahmani interfluve. The Bansloi in the north of the Rampurhat subdivision and the more sluggish Pagla between the Bansloi and the Brahmani, are smaller rivers of the same kind as the Mayur-

The Tripita

The Gamri

The Bansloi & the Pagla

akshi and follow courses described earlier. The Bansloi, coming from the west as a broad and perennial stream flows two miles north of Murarai police station, becomes non-perennial and sand choked after taking a northeasterly course just after crossing the Eastern Railway Line and falls into the Bhagirathi opposite Jangipur in the district of Murshidabad. It is a plateau stream which is apt to overflow after heavy rainfall.

The Dwaraka

The Dwaraka is a narrow non-perennial stream of considerable length, about 44 miles within the district. Originating from the Ramgarh hills of the Chotanagpur plateau the Dwaraka describes the district boundary from 87°30′ E. & 24°7′ N. for a few miles flowing south-east. In its southeasterly course the Dwaraka receives numerous small tributaries of which mention might be made of the Bamini Nala, a right bank tributary meeting the Dwaraka at 157 feet. All of them are non-perennial having dry sandy beds and quite a few have been dammed to form reservoirs. Settlements are sparse but cluster round such reservoirs and tanks. From 24° N. & 87°38′ E. where it receives the Kulia Nala at 125 feet from the right bank, the Dwaraka swings east and then north-east describing almost a circle. In its northeasterly course the Dwaraka receives many tributaries on its right bank. The Gharmora and the Chila Nalas originating from the eastern face of the Ramgarh hills flow due east, the latter describing the district boundary for a considerable length. The Ghagar, a left bank tributary of the Gharmora, forms the subdivisional boundary for a few miles. The Gharmora and the Chila combine at about 24°6′15″ N. & 87°46′ E. and the united stream debouches into the Dwaraka at about 87°48′ E. & 24°7′30″ N. From this point 2 miles downstream the Dwaraka receives another left bank tributary (anonymous) flowing south-east which makes the master stream to swing to the east (from 87°50′ E.). In its easterly course the Dwaraka receives a few tributaries from the south. Permanent settlements fringe the banks of the main northeasterly flowing Dwaraka but avoid the immediate vicinity of the banks as soon as the river turns eastwards. The Dwaraka unites with the Brahmani and debouches in the Bhagirathi in Murshidabad district.

(Margin notes: The Bamini; The Kulia; The Gharmora & the Chila; The Ghagar)

River control and changes effected in the configuration of the country by the construction of canals etc.

The chief characteristic of all the streams described above is that they flow with tremendous velocity in the monsoon months, carrying substantial volume of sand and silt, but become almost dry in winter. During the monsoon they often overflow their banks, damage crops and cause heavy soil-erosion. Most of their water runs to waste. To make a better utilisation of water for irrigation and generation of hydel power, to check soil erosion and ravages of flood, river valley projects have been drawn up. Of these projects the Mayurakshi Valley Project is the principal one.

The project as executed consists of (1) a reservoir dam across the Mayurakshi at Masanjore on the Archaean terrain of the Dumka hills, (2) a main barrage across the same river at Tilpara about 25 miles below Masanjore and (3) two canal systems — the 'North Bank Canals' and the 'South Bank Canals'. The mean elevation above sea level of the Mayurakshi river-banks at the dam site is 300 feet. The height of the dam is 123 feet above the river bed and 155 feet above the deepest foundation. It is 2,010 feet long from hill to hill of which 740 feet on the right side forms the spillway for the surplus high flood discharge. Though within Bihar, the dam and the reservoir are owned by West Bengal. The reservoir commanding a catchment area of 718 square miles where the mean annual precipitation is 57 inches, is about 15 miles long and 7 miles wide with a peripheral length of about 130 miles. The gross reservoir capacity is 5,00,000 acre feet. The dead storage area is 3,100 acres which stores 55,000 ac. ft. The gross command area of the project is 1,240 square miles in West Bengal of which 853 square miles is in Birbhum and the rest in Murshidabad and Burdwan.*

Some 25 miles below Masanjore Dam (also called the Canada Dam) and at a distance of a couple of miles from Suri is the main barrage of the project, the Tilpara barrage, from which two main canals take off on either bank of the river. Tilpara is just below the 200 feet contour line and the barrage heads-up water up to a height of 20 feet creating a 5 mile long pool along the river bed. Thus it is beyond the capacity of Mayurakshi canals to serve areas the elevations of which are higher than 220 feet. The catchment area of the barrage is 1,239 sq. miles. The barrage is 1,013 ft. long and has 15 bays of 60 feet each. Of these, 4 bays on each side constitute the undersluices and the central 7 bays form the weir. The level of the crest of the undersluice bays is 3 ft. lower than the weir crest level, the depths of the undersluice and weir gates are 16′6″ and 13′6″ respectively. The maximum discharging capacity of the gates is 2,91,000 cusecs.

There are two head regulators for the two canals on either side, each having 20 feet wide vents controlled by counter balanced gates. Each canal has the capacity to receive 3,500 cusecs or 13 lakh gallons of water per minute. The main canals have been taken over a number of cross drainage works with barrages across the Kopai, the Dwaraka and the Brahmani and a weir across the Bakreswar. The Dwaraka barrage at Deocha (87°35′ E. & 24°2′ 30″ N.) commanding a catchment area of 117.0 sq. miles, has a length of 274 feet with 6 bays and 2 undersluices of 30 feet each and a head regulator the maximum discharge capacity of which is 1,695 cusecs.

* Source: Data Book of Mayurakshi Reservoir Project, 1966 (*unpublished*).

The Brahmani barrage at Baidara (24°15′N. & 87°44′30″E.) commanding a catchment area of 259 square miles, has a length of 415 feet with 10 bays and 2 undersluices of 30 feet each and a head regulator, the maximum discharge capacity of which is 825 cusecs.

At Kadisala (87°27′15″E. & 23°47′30″N.), the old weir across the Bakreswar constructed in 1928-30, have been remodelled to suit the present requirements. This weir commanding a catchment area of 48.8 square miles, has a total length of 300 feet of which the weir itself is 223 feet. It has two undersluices of 24 feet each and one head regulator the maximum discharge capacity of which is 2,410 cusecs.

The Kopai barrage at Kultore (87°30′45″E. & 23°0′40″N.) commanding a catchment area of 82 square miles, has a length of 216 feet with 4 bays and two undersluices of 30 feet each and a head regulator the maximum discharge capacity of which is 1,940 cusecs.

In addition to the above barrages, numerous cross drainage structures big and small, such as aqueducts, syphons, superpassages, inlet-cum-escapes, bridges, falls and regulators have also been built in the branch canals and distributaries. Total number of such structures completed up to the end of 1965 was nearly 1,500 out of a total number of 1,880 structures approximately.

The project envisaged 224.31 miles of main and branch canals and 783 miles of distributaries. It had been estimated that 1,600 acres of land would be permanently required for this canal network and that it would involve about 110 crores cubic feet of excavation work. The North Bank Main Canal runs athwart the general slope towards north-northeast. The South Bank Main Canal also runs athwart the general gradient towards south till it reaches Ilambazar thana from where it turns east. All the branch canals take off at right angles from the main canal and flow east but their distributaries flow either north-east or south-east describing a dendritic pattern. The western parts (of the main canal) being higher in elevation, do not receive any irrigation water. Rajnagar, Khayrasol, western parts of Dubrajpur, Ilambazar, Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Murarai police stations are thus outside the Mayurakshi irrigation scheme. From a distance the main canal appears as a high levee. The Bakreswar weir and all the barrages along the main canal system are just below 200 feet. The map will explain the alignment of the canal network vis-a-vis the topography and the river system.

Floods

Widespread floods are uncommon, but excessive rain sometimes causes serious inundations from the rivers Ajay, Hingla, Mayurakshi, Bansloi and Brahmani. Certain stretches of the

WEST BENGAL
DISTRICT BIRBHUM
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION
LEGEND
DISTRICT HEAD QUARTERS SURI
SUBDIVISION HEAD QUARTERS RAMPURHAT
RAILWAY LINE WITH STATION
METALLED ROAD
UN-METALLED ROAD
POST OFFICE PO
POST & TELEGRAPH OFFICE PTO
DAK BUNGALOW DB
INSPECTION BUNGALOW IB
HEALTH CENTRE H
COLLEGE C
UNIVERSITY UN
BANKING CENTRE B
REFERENCE
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
THANA BOUNDARY
RIVER
PREPARED BY
DILIP K. KHAN.
DT. MURSHIDABAD
MURARAI
NALHATI
RAMPURHAT
MAHAMMAD BAZAR
MAYURESWAR
RAJNAGAR
SURI
SAINTHIA
KHAYRASOL
LABHPUR
DUBRAJPUR
ILLAM BAZAR
NANUR
BOLPUR
SANTI NIKETAN
DT. BURDWAN
KATWA
KANDI
SANTAL PARGANAS DISTRICT
AJOY RIVER
LOOP LINE

WEST BENGAL
BIRBHUM DISTRICT
RELIEF & DRAINAGE
INDEX
PERENNIAL STREAM
NON PERENNIAL STREAM
SPOT HEIGHT
CONTOUR LINE
MURARAI
NALHATI
RAMPURHAT
MAYURESWAR
MAHAMMAD BAZAR
RAJNAGAR
SAINTHIA
SURI
LABHPUR
KHAYRASOL
DUBRAJPUR
AJOY RIVER
ILLAMBAZAR
BOLPUR
NANUR
N
SCALE
REFERENCE
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
RIVER
PREPARED BY
DILIP K KHAN

river Ajay are known to be subject to periodic floods. These stretches have been embanked partly by the Government and partly by the erstwhile zamindars. The stretches embanked have already been described and it appears from the embankments that the Burdwan district is more susceptible to floods from the Ajay than the Birbhum district. Sometimes these embankments breach and vast tracts are overrun by flood waters that flow through numerous openings in the approach embankments to the railway bridges over the river Ajay and join the main stream lower down. The levels attained during the 1956 floods (26th September) which is the highest on record may be recounted here. At Pandaveswar on the Andal-Sainthia railway line the Ajay rose 7.6 feet and came back to normal in three days. At Dihi Betial, opposite Jaydeb Kenduli and 12 miles downstream from Pandaveswar, the rise was 10.2 feet and took four days to come back to normal. At Satkahania, 18 miles from Pandaveswar and 2 miles upstream of the road bridge connecting Panagar with Ilambazar, the rise was as steep as 17.55 feet and came back to normal in four days. This rise was probably due to the constriction of flow caused by the approach road embankment which was breached the following day (27th September). At Maliara, about 27 miles from Pandaveswar, the river rose 10.1 feet and came back to normal in four days. At Budra, 31 miles from Pandaveswar, the river rose only 6.6 feet but came back to normal in six days. It was estimated that the maximum discharge that might have passed in this reach of the river during the 1956 flood was of the order of 3,00,000 cusecs.[1]

In the immediate vicinity of Katwa (in Burdwan district), where the river Bhagirathi has got a maximum carrying capacity of 1,27,000 cusecs, the abrupt inflow of 3,00,000 cusecs brought forth a catastrophic situation not only for Burdwan, Nadia and Murshidabad but also for Birbhum. The Bhagirathi is the ultimate outfall of the Brahmani, the Dwaraka, the Kana Mayurakshi, the Mayurakshi, the Koiya and large marshes called *bil*, such as, Balur, Patan, Gorkama, Talkar and Hijol, which receive the spill water of all these rivers. When the Bhagirathi is in flood which is further aggravated by the backing up effect of the Ajay flood water, the waters brought down by the Mayurakshi-Dwaraka system of rivers cannot find their way out

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[1] Report on the floods of September-October 1956 in Central, Western and Southern Districts of West Bengal, Government of West Bengal. Alipore, July 1957 pp. 22-23.

and head up in the Hijol and other *bils*. Such synchronization is not infrequent. The situation has further worsened due to reclamation of these flood detention reservoirs by natural process of silt deposition and also by erratic Gher Bundh for cultivation. The consequence is a greater depth of flooding, longer period of submergence and increased pressure on bridges and embankments. Thus, the major floods which haunt Birbhum have their roots in the neighbouring districts which suffer from drainage problems.

Roads and settlements avoid the immediate vicinity of the river banks of the north-northeast flowing Pagla and Bansloi in Murarai and Nalhati thanas and that of the east flowing Koiya in Labhpur and Nanur thanas due to floods. At Ganutia, east of Sainthia, the Mayurakshi has before now given considerable trouble during floods by altering its course, cutting into the roads and threatening to sweep away the celebrated old silk filature at that place. Like Mayurakshi, the Brahmani also displays two channels (referred to earlier) which were abandoned during high floods leaving behind ruins of many flourishing villages. The northeasterly flowing Dwaraka swings to the east from 87°50′ E. and from this point the Dwaraka frequently changes her course and inundates large tracts within Birbhum as well as Murshidabad. The area within Birbhum is full of ox-bow lakes and the banks are without any road or settlement. The Gambhira which meets the Brahmani at about 24°6′ N. & 88°4′40″ E. in Murshidabad district is also flood-prone, though not so much as in Murshidabad district. The banks of Mayurakshi distributaries show a more dense settlement than that of the present Mayurakshi channel. This is probably due to the unstable regimen of the present channel.

The question has been repeatedly asked since the disastrous floods of 1956, whether the operational programme of the Masanjore Reservoir could be so modified as to give partial flood relief to the Kandi subdivision and its adjoining police stations in Birbhum district. All the rivers — Kopai, Bakreswar, Mayurakshi, Dwaraka and Brahmani — together with their numerous tributaries that drain into the Hijol *Bil* and other *bils* of Kandi subdivision carry the run-off from 4,500 square miles. Out of this the Masanjore Dam controls only 718 square miles. It is obvious that even if all the run-off from the catchment of Masanjore Dam could be held back at the reservoir, the effect would be negligible. Probably, this is the reason why there is

no provision of flood control in the Mayurakshi Project. In the Mayurakshi canal system no separate drainage channels have been provided nor has the improvement of the existing drainage channels been found necessary. Wherever the irrigation channels have crossed the existing drainage channels, cross-drainage works have been provided. The West Bengal Enquiry Committee in its report on the floods of September-October 1956 observed that among other things the foremost local factor responsible for flood was the deterioration of the rivers Koiya, Ajay, Mayurakshi, Kana Mayurakshi and Dwaraka due to deposition of sand brought down from the upper catchment area by soil erosion. The Committee emphasized the importance of proper attention to these catchment areas. It recommended a dam on the Ajay as a detention reservoir, an outfall from the Mayurakshi river in the Bhagirathi and improvement of the Bhagirathi channel itself. A scheme to control the Hingla river is expected to materialize very soon.[1]

Lakes and tanks

In the northernmost part of Birbhum there are several swamps, most important of them being Pahankuri (87°55′45″E. & 24°32′40″N.), Chatankura (87°53′40″E. & 24°33′45″N.) and Rajchandrapur *Bil* (87°53′E. & 24°31′N.). On the Dwaraka-Mayurakshi interfluve and extreme south-west of Mayureswar thana, two large water bodies occupy a low lying depression. These lakes (23°59′N. & 87°44′E.) with several islands appear like a honeycomb on the map. Several marshes are found on the right bank of the Mayurakshi, most important of them being at 87°34′45″E., 87°36′E., 87°42′E and 87°44′E. All of them are connected with the master stream by spill channels. There is a large swamp to the east of Andal-Sainthia Chord line one and a half miles above the rail bridge over the Ajay. It is fed by spill channels of both the Hingla and the Ajay. Many derelict channels forming linear or ox-bow lakes are found on the right bank of the Dwaraka to the east of 87°50′E. The largest marsh, however, has been formed by a comparatively smaller stream, namely the Koiya on the Birbhum-Murshidabad border. During the monsoon a large part of this low lying area (drained by the Koiya and the Kandar) remains submerged under water.

Birbhum is full of tanks—in fact, in most parts of Birbhum, settlements are nucleated around tanks. Tank irrigation predominates. "Several of these tanks are old and of large size,

[1] Report on the floods of September-October, 1956 in Central, Western and Southern districts of West Bengal. New Alipore, 1957. pp. 43 & 47.

e.g., Dantindighi one mile from Dubrajpur, the Rajpur Sair four miles south of Suri, and the Lambodarpur Sair a mile northwest of the same place. Smaller tanks are very numerous, and it has been estimated that each village has at least five on the average. In the village of Sankarpur, for instance, there are 111 tanks occupying 167 acres, and 46 are so close to each other, that mere footpaths on the top of the banks separate one from another. Owing, however, to the neglect of the Zamindars (many of them absentees) and the apathy of the population at large, many of the irrigation tanks have silted up and become useless; some of them have become so dry that they are let out for cultivation."[1]

Near the Phullara temple at Labhpur is a large dried up lake named Daldali, about 300 bighas in area. It is so called (from *dal-dal*, a quaking quagmire) because if one stands in any part of it a large portion oscillates.

At the old fort of Bhimgarh six miles south-west of Dubrajpur is a tank named Sona Chal Dighi, which is said to have yielded gold and hence the name.

GEOLOGY

The geological succession found in the district is as given below:

Recent	:	Alluvium.
Tertiary (Miocene)	:	Laterite & Lateritic gravels with fossil wood. Clay beds. Ferruginous & falspathic sandstone & clay-beds.
Middle to Upper Jurassic	:	Rajmahal Traps.
Upper Gondwanas (Middle Trias-Jurassic)	:	Grit, ironstone, sandstone & shales with beds of fire-clay & coal seams.

UNCONFORMITY

Archaeans	:	Granite (porphyritic & graphic) gneisses & schists with pegmatite and quarty veins.

Palaeogeography

Archaeans are the oldest rock formations in this district, its granitoid and schistose rocks having crystallised at least 900

[1] L.S.S. O'Malley — op. cit. p. 34.

million years ago. These are a continuation to the east of the Peninsular Archaeans of the Chotanagpur Plateau. These regions were subjected to great diastrophic movements and erosion through a considerable period. On the deeply denuded edges of the contorted Archaeans, the sedimentary formations of Purana age were deposited. Undoubtedly no Purana rocks, however, have yet been reported from the Birbhum district. The zone of unconformity between the Archaeans and the Lower Gandwanas is the evidence of large-scale crustal movements and deformation that brought about revolutionary changes in the physiography at the end of the Purana period. Consequent to the readjustment that followed these crustal movements, large areas of India, hitherto landmasses, were brought under sedimentation. From this era the Himalayan geosynclinal trough which was then forming at the floor of the Tethys or the ancient Mediterranean Ocean was filled with considerable thickness of marine sediments ranging in age from Permian to Eocene. These post Purana-Upper Carboniferous crustal movements manifested themselves into block type of earth movements in the Peninsular India and were responsible for development of tensional cracks and subsidence of large linear tracts between more or less vertical fissures culminating into basin shaped depressions or troughs on the ancient Archaeans. These events have important bearings on the geological structure of Birbhum district. The geological structure of the Tangsuli basin (Lower Gondwanas) and the fault zone along quartz ridges (Upper Gondwanas) owe their origin to these events. The hot springs of Bakreswar, probably lying along a fissure zone in the granite-gneiss, are also due to these events.

Thus, the commencement of the Aryan era was followed by a cycle of fluviatile sedimentation resulting in the subsidence of the loaded basins. This process which later continued *pari passu* beginning with the Upper Carboniferous of the Palaeozoic till the end of the Mesozoic period (with certain stratigraphic breaks or unconformities as in the middle Trias) resulted in the formation of the most characteristic system of thick fluviatile or lacustrine formation of shales and sand-stones with intercalations of valuable coal seams belonging to the Gondwana system. Deposition of these immense formations with their valuable coal seams in the gradually sinking basins are responsible for their preservation not only from denudation but also from the effects of folding and crushing.

This Gondwana period witnessed a cycle of climatic changes as evinced from the nature of its rock formations and their fossil content. The presence of glacial boulder beds in the same horizon in widely separated areas at the base of the Gondwanas suggests the prevalence of glacial epoch at the commencement of the Upper Carboniferous period. The warm climate which followed during the Damuda period is marked by the preponderance of coal seams pointing to the abundance of terrestrial vegetation at that time.

During the Upper Gondwana period, the Gondwana land was subjected to marked vulcanicity, which manifested itself into outpouring of Rajmahal lava flows and intrusions of numerous sills and dykes of basic and ultrabasic rocks. These intrusives, abundant in the Lower Gondwana rocks, have often damaged the coal seams near their contacts—the coal seams thus burnt being known as *Jhama*. Exposures of Rajmahal traps of early Cretaceous age occur along the western fringe of the district in Rampurhat and Nalhati thanas.

Approximately to the east of the Andal-Sainthia Chord and the Eastern Railway Loop lines the Archaeans and the Rajmahal traps disappear below a blanket of Alluvium. Geology of this portion of the district, which lie concealed below a capping of Holocene alluvium, was completely unknown until recently, till extensive subsurface investigations were undertaken, mainly in connection with exploration for petroleum. An exploratory borehole was drilled to a depth of over 1,500 metres at Bolpur under the Indo-Stanvac Project, but no oil worth commercial exploitation was found. At this borehole below a 65 metres thick sequence of gravel, sand and laterite interbeds, sedimentary rocks of Tertiary and Cretaceous ages, such as sandstone, conglomeratic sandstone, clay shales of various colours and sandy limestone were found; these rocks indicate local alterations of deltaic, estuarine and shallow marine conditions during their deposition. At a depth of 1,193 metres below the sea level these sedimentary rocks are underlain with an unconformity by basaltic rocks presumably of the same age (Upper Jurassic to Lower Cretaceous) as the Rajmahal Volcanics. The borehole penetrated 287 metres into the basalt before it was abandoned.[1]

A number of buried domal structures of varying dimensions have been detected in the Archaean Shield below the alluvium up to a zone passing through Midnapur, West Galsi and Jangipur

[1] B. Ray — Census 1961, West Bengal, District Census Handbook : Birbhum. Calcutta, 1966. pp. 9-10.

areas. Some of these structures are possibly only erosional features on the Archaean basement, while others might be related to basic volcanic activity and might even represent the fossil vents of eruption. This explains the unconformity at the base of the sedimentaries referred to above. What is more significant is that these buried basement ridges in the western fringe of the Bengal basin presumably kept the basin of Gondwana sedimentation isolated from the main Bengal basin through most of the Tertiary times. Presence of the Durgapur beds possibly estuarine counterpart of some shallow marine, Middle Miocene formations in the West Bengal subsurface near Raniganj, suggest extensive marine transgression, across the basement ridges in the late Tertiary.[1].

Thus, the lower Cretaceous vulcanicity, about 136 million years back, marked the initiation of a prolonged period of Mesozoic—Tertiary basin movements in the Bengal delta. Synthesis of the geological observations in the surface and subsurface of Bengal with the recorded Geology of Assam, helps in the reconstruction of the stages of evolution of the Bengal basin from an epicontinental sea. The Bengal basin including the coastal parts of Orissa and Sunderbans and excluding East Pakistan, is reported to cover an area of about 77,700 sq. km. (30,000 sq. miles). It is bounded on the north by a buried ridge running east-west between the Rajmahal and the Meghalaya. The drilling data of the Exploratory Tube-wells Organisation from Mandilpur (24°04'N. & 88°09'E.) in the Malda district and from Buniadpur (25°23'N. & 88°24'E.) in the West Dinajpur district revealed the presence of granite gneiss at respective depths of 260.6 m. and 307.2 m.[2] The configuration of this hidden basement complex of the Meghalaya-Rajmahal gap is probably of the nature of a saddle—concave along the east-west axis and convex along the northwest-southeast axis.[3]

This means that the basement complex in Birbhum slopes east and south-east. Core samples from the basalt covering this basement complex indicate that these lava flows took place in continental environment concurrent with the Rajmahal or the Sylhet traps. This was followed, during the late Cretaceous, by a slow subsidence of the shelf area of the Bengal basin in effect of the

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1 S. Sengupta — 'Geology of Southwestern Bengal' in West Bengal. Calcutta, 1970. p. 1.

2 A. Hunday & S. Banerjee — Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. 97. Delhi, 1967. p. 46.

3 Satyeshchandra Chakraborty — 'Some considerations on the evolution of physiography of Bengal' in West Bengal. Calcutta, 1970. p. 18.

Naga-Lushai orogen and in response with the normal plasticity of the sub-crustal formations. The Himalayan orogen had started long before the Naga-Lushai orogen and the two cycles operated independent of each other.

In other words, in terms of the tectonic frame of Bengal the Meghalaya-Rajmahal saddle beneath Birbhum should have relatively thin overlay of recent sedimentaries and should have formed a land surface for a long time during which the tectonic subsidence of the basement complex of Bengal was taking place. There is, however, no geophysical evidence to help us to ascertain the exact date until which the Meghalaya-Rajmahal saddle remained a part of the ancient land surface of Bengal. Nevertheless we may note that along this saddle we have a peculiar land formation called the lateritic Rarh which is undulated in character, dissected in appearance and formed of ferralitic materials. The ferralitic contents suggest a long and probably continuous exposure to subaerial conditions of this landmass, which has thus acquired a distinctive character in contrast to the more recent alluviums flanking it.[1] The Rarh lateritic terraces separate the ancient Archaean formations from the alluviums all along the eastern margin of the Chotanagpur plateau.

The origin of these laterites is somewhat controversial. They range in age from Cretaceous to Pleistocene and the process of laterization on the various rock exposures is continuing in optimum conditions even in recent times. Many of the laterite occurrences show Tertiary formations below. As such, these laterites can be considered to be younger in age than the Tertiary. It is not unlikely that the laterite occurrences which are hitherto grouped under the Older Alluvium in many places, may also have concealed the Tertiary formations below. Very strangely some of the older laterite terrain in Birbhum appear like sea-cliffs from a distance. These could probably have formed *in situ*, as is happening in many tropical lands in recent times. Like all primary laterites (in the sense that they can be traced back to their parent igneous rocks) they occur as hard consolidated blocks. But the presence of a subsurface layer of Kaolinitic clay bed tinged from above by ferrous colloids, an admixture of rounded pebbles of heterogenous rocks with the laterites and a general absence of normal lateritic horizons indicate that more probably these were residual weathering products of the nearly

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[1] loc. cit.

peneplained Archaean massif and they were carried by rivers into shallow coastal seas. It logically follows that the lateritic Rarh tract of West Bengal and Birbhum in particular (being situated at the head of the embayment), was the first deltaic landforms developed in the mio-geosyncline of the Naga-Lushai orogen.

The extent of submergence during the Cretaceous may be visualized from the fact that a bold embayed coast, now known as the Damodar Embayment reached as far north as the present Jalangi Debagram area of the Nadia district. The thickness of the Cretaceous formation sharply expresses the configuration of the Damodar Embayment. Sedimentaries of the Upper Cretaceous system have a general northeast-southwest strike. The continental deposits on the west become progressively more marine towards south-east. The shallowest subsea depth of the Cretaceous formation was registered at Bolpur and the deepest somewhere around Memari.[1]

Some 65 to 58 million years from now, Paleocene and Lower Eocene epochs witnessed continental, transitional and shallow marine deposition of sand. This formation contains petroleum and gas, which however, could not be located in Birbhum. The pattern of deposition was, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to that in the Upper Cretaceous times, with a low regional dip of about 2° to the south-east and an indication that the shoreline of the epicontinental sea or the Embayment migrated further to the south.

Marine transgression during Middle Eocene times shifted all bands of deposition westward from the shoreline of the Paleocene and Lower Eocene times. The sand percentage contours (nil at Galsi and a recorded maximum of 69% sand at Bolpur) show the same regional trend and sharply express the Damodar Embayment in the underlying formation. As sand decreases, lime increases basin-ward (2% carbonate at Bolpur increases to 90% at Jalangi). Upper Eocene transgressions moved the shoreline of the epicontinental sea further west so that the entire Hooghly district and parts of Bankura, Burdwan and Birbhum are underlain by shallow marine deposits, chiefly limestone. It appears that the limestone cap in Birbhum was not sufficient to preserve the petroleum and gas of the underlying formations.

Oligocene regression, which started about 36 million years ago,

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[1] N. N. Sen — 'Palaeogeography of the Calcutta Metropolitan District and its Neighbourhood' in Geographical Review of India, Vol. XXX, No. 2. Calcutta, June 1968. pp. 26-27.

moved the shoreline downdip to such an extent that only the southeastern portions of the Calcutta Metropolitan District are underlain by marine deposits while the rest of it consists of transitional and shallow marine deposits. The bed is only 164 feet thick at Bolpur on the West and increases to 568 feet at Memari. The Upper boundary of the Oligocene beds is marked by an unconformity.[1]

During the Miocene transgressive phase, only some 25 to 13 million years back, the sea moved the furthest west enclosing the eastern end of the Raniganj area.[2] The prevailing rocks are mixtures of sand and clay or alternating laminae of the same. During this time, practically the whole of Bengal and Assam was subjected to major tectonic movements. Movements on the major northeast-southwest tending fault zones of the Bengal basin caused rapid sinking of the deeper shelf and the geosynclinal parts of the basin, resulting in marine transgression in the eastern part of the stable Bengal shelf. During late Miocene and early Pliocene, most of Assam underwent a phase of intense tectonic activity. Movements on the Dauki fault and northwesterly movements on the Naga thrusts were initiated. This activity was accentuated during the Pliocene, when most of the mobile belt was uplifted, and widespread regression of the sea followed.[3]

Marine regression is evident in Pliocene (started about 13 million years ago) and older Pleistocene times (only one million years old) from the continental and transitional sediments covering entire Birbhum. The basal Pliocene beds associated with the Miocene-Pliocene unconformity have yielded some genuine shows of hydrocarbons in the southern parts of the Bengal basin which was in a shallow marine environment. In contrast, the Himalayan foothills and northern Bengal was under a glacio-fluvial geomorphic cycle. The boundary between these two units is the lateritic or ferallitic terrain which passes through Birbhum, Barind, Madhupurgarh, Bhowalgarh and Lalmai hills.[4]

Possibly only very late in the Pleistocene, with the uplift of the

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1 It is interesting to compare this structure with the Barail series of Assam which is, *mutatis mutandis*, geologically isochronous and marked by a similar zone of unconformity; *a fortiori*, as in Assam, so in the Bengal basin the Oligocene is characterised by a very small proportion of oil and gas but above the unconformity, in Miocene beds, the heavy minerals are both more abundant and varied.

2 Edwin H. Pascoe — A Manual of the Geology of India, Vol. III. Calcutta, 1963, p. 1685.

3 S. Sengupta — op. cit. pp. 5-6.

4 N. N. Sen — op. cit. p. 29.

Tertiary folded belt of Tripura, the Shillong massif and (less conspicuous) Meghalaya-Rajmahal saddle beneath Birbhum, did the sea finally recede completely from the Bengal basin area. Erosion occurred then, followed by peneplanation of the whole Tertiary basin area of Bengal. Due to the recession of the sea, the estuaries of the streams draining the ferallitic-lateritic lands were prograded and the landscape of Birbhum derived its dissected features. The South Bengal basin, it is believed, is still rising.[1] Finally, the older sediments were covered completely by a thick mantle of river borne Holocene alluvium.

Palaeontology

Lower Gondwana :-- From Harinisinga megaplant fossils, viz. *Schizoneura gondwanensis, Glossopteris indica* and *Vertebraria indica* were found which indicate a probable Barakar or Raniganj age.

A borehole sample near Jaidev yielded spores and pollen of *Striatites, Faunipollenites, Barakarites* and *Parasaccites* indicating a Barakar age.

Upper Gondwana :--From Dewanganj area megaplant fossils of *Ptilophyllum acutifolium, Taeniopteris sp.* were found indicating the presence of Upper Gondwana horizon probably of Jura-Cretaceous time.

Palynological study of samples from this area has also yielded a few lycopodiales and polypodiaceae spores and conifer pollen along with some tracheids indicating a probable Lower Cretaceous age.

From Manumnagar-Harmadanga area also some pteridophyte spore and conifer pollen of Upper Gondwana affinity were reported.

Tertiary :—The Palynological analysis from different areas show the presence of Lower Tertiary starts. The samples from Chakmurai, Bharkhuria, Kanduli, Rampurttai, Digalram, Ranipur, Supalkunri, Maldigi, Bortola, Puratangram and Kharbona have yielded pollens belonging to Malvaceae, Myrtaceae, Fagaceae, Palmae, Polypodiaceae, Gleicheniaceae, Schizeaceae, Cyatheaceae, Betulaceae, Nymphaeaceae, etc. and indicate age from Eocene to Miocene.

Fossil wood specimens from river Bakreswar near Raipur, Sukhbazar and Ajay river near Kalikapur were examined but found to be difficult of generic identification as the preservation was not good. However, these fossils show affinity with Tertiary.

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[1] Satyeshchandra Chakraborty — op. cit. pp. 27-28.

Dipterocarpoxylon sp., a common fossil wood of Miocene age, has also been identified from this district.[1]

Lithology

Archaeans :—These formations, which crystallised at least 900 million years ago, comprise the granite-gneisses, biotiteschists and calo-granulites traversed by quartz and pegmatite veins. Graphic inter-growths of quartz and felspar are observed in pegmatite near Khairahundi, Raspur and Kadirganj in Mahammad Bazar.

There is a curious mass of granite at Dubrajpur about 2.4 km. south-west of Suri railway station. The rock rises perpendicularly to a height of about 30 feet, and is broken up into numerous irregular massive fragments due to weathering. The blocks are rounded, water-worm and of a dark brown colour but unweathered surfaces show a light brown or reddish colour. A few large granitic boulders are also found in the vicinity.

Lower-Gondwanas (Permian) :—Damuda Series, Barakar Stage. The Lower Gondwana rocks, overlying the Archaeans with an unconformity, are the Barakars (of the Damuda Series), and form the northern extension of the Raniganj coalfield, and also occur as a small detached basin known as the Tangsuli basin, consisting of pebbly sandstone, grits, sandstones and carbonaceous-shales with thin stringers of coal. They are exposed over an area of about five sq. km. lying between the Hingla and Ajay rivers and to the north of the Mayurakshi river, a few km. north-west of Suri (23°55′ : 87°32′) and north of the Tangsuli village (23°58′: 87°29′).

The Talchirs are absent and the boundaries are somewhat obscured by laterite. Other Gondwana fields are also situated close to the Tangsuli basin. About 32 km. south-west of Tangsuli are the Damuda rocks of the Ajay river, and within 48 km. to the west at Kundit-Karaia is an exposure of the Barakar coal measures, with an outlier of the Talchirs in between. The minimum distance of Rajmahal traps and Dubrajpur beds from the Tangsuli outlier is about 11 km. to the north-east of Deocha (24°02′ : 87°35′) on the Dwaraka river.[2]

Upper Gondwanas (Middle Trias-Jurassic) :—The Upper Gondwana sedimentaries are overlying the Archaeans on the west with an unconformity and often this contact is a faulted one and the fault-zone being marked by occasional quartz ridges and brecciated material. They are characterised by the presence

[1] Source: The Director General, Geological Survey of India.
[2] A. Hunday & S. Banerjee — op. cit. p. 43.

of white shaly clay (locally used as fire-clay), and occur as disconnected exposures, 4 km. long and 2 km. wide, extending from Harmadanga on the south of Katpahari on the north. The maximum thickness of the sedimentary sequence is about 30 m. (south of Dewanganj).

Basalt traps (Middle to Upper Jurassic):—The Rajmahal traps are found about 48 km. north of the Raniganj coalfield along the western margin of the northern portion of the district. Basalt flows overlie the Upper Gondwana formation in Dewanganj area, often with a baked contact. Places where traps occur are Saldanga, Baramasia, Sagarbandhi, Nawapara, Palasbani, Maluti, etc. The rocks generally form hill tracts with a characteristic flat-topped or terrace-like topography.

The Rajmahal Series of the Upper Gondwana consists of 610 m. thick bedded basalts with about 30.5 m. of intertrappean beds consisting of siliceous and porcellanoid carbonaceous clays and sandstones. The traps are represented by medium to fine-grained basalt, often vesicular and amygdaloidal, well seen in a canal section to the north of Dharampur. Agate and chalcedony fragments, possibly transported and redeposited, occur as thin bands near the trap boundary in the above canal section. The occurrence of these minerals would indicate the age of the flows to the basal part of the Rajmahal trap sequence.

Columnar joints are sometimes present in the traps, e.g. in Pachami area, Saldanga, Baramasia, Sagarbandhi, etc. The traps are altered, especially along the southern boundary, to laterite.

Tertiary Rocks:—The Tertiaries comprise mostly sandstone (felspathic & ferruginous, also loose and friable sandstone grit) and clay beds. Several patchy exposures of the sequence are met with in the Mahammad Bazar-Kharia-Kumarpur, Salak-Makhdumnagar-Shaikerdah; Chaubatta-Maubedia, Tentulia-Uska; Bartola; Chaknurai; Chandidaspur, etc. The Tertiary formations are associated with angiospermous fossil-wood as at 3.2 km. south-west of Suri. Similar occurrences are noted in a well section near Bolpur, Mahammad Bazar, etc. These apparently isolated patches of Tertiary rocks over a wide belt suggest the presence of a continuous belt of Tertiary rocks in this part of the State.[1]

The Tertiary sequence overlies the Rajmahal Traps, but in the areas to the west of Makhdumnagar, it directly overlies the Archaeans, as proved by drilling.

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[1] A. Hunday & S. Banerjee — op. cit. p. 45.

The clay (China clay or Kaolin) occurs as thick beds up to a maximum of over 30 metres.

Laterites (*Tertiary-Miocene*) :—Laterite, mostly vermicular type, occurs as a cap rock over the basalts and Tertiary formations. Pellety laterite is recorded at a few places like Sialdanga. Vermicular laterite occurs mostly *in situ* as cap rock over basalt as at Pachami, Kapasdanga, Sagarbandhi, Baramasia, west Nalhati, etc. Vermicular laterite also occurs over and within the Tertiary sequence as in Salak-Makhdumnagar-Shaikerdah area.

Pellety laterite is mostly associated with bauxitic clay as at Sialdanga. Laterite gravel has a widespread occurrence in the area. It is presumed to be of detrital origin. Lateritic clay occurs at low levels and shows stratification.

Laterites are known to form by the sub-aerial weathering of almost all types of rocks in a monsoon (tropical) climate with alternate dry and wet seasons. The laterites found in the State are partly primary as they could be traced to the parent rock from which they have been derived, partly detrital and partly of doubtful origin.

The primary laterites generally occur as hard consolidated blocks and show variegated colours. Limonite occurs in abundance in all the types of laterites. Two generations of limonite have been distinguished from textural features in some of these laterites; X-ray studies reveal the presence of goethite in major quantity, haematite in minor quantity and gibbsite, kaolinite, anatase and calcite in traces.

The white clay occurring as tube-filling and irregular bands in vermicular laterites is composed mainly of kaolinite and traces of quartz.

Chemical analyses of a large number of laterite samples, collected from different parts of the area, indicate that Fe_2O_3 varies antipathetically with Al_2O_3 and that $Fe_2O_3:Al_2O_3$ ratio ranges from 1:0.2 to 1:2.01. TiO_2 has a slight sympathetic relationship with Fe_2O_3. The presence of anatase probably accounts for the appreciable amount of TiO_2 (1.5% to 5.0%) in these laterites.

The chemical changes involved in the conversion of basalt to laterites are marked by a significant reduction in the percentage of most of the chemical components excepting Fe_2O_3 which shows a sharp rise from 4.80% in basalt to about 51% in laterites capping it.

Older Alluvium :—The alluvial deposits cover approximately

four fifths of the area of the State. The Older Alluvium (Bhanagar) is coarse and generally of reddish colour containing abundant disseminations of calcareous and limonitic concretions. This alluvium is probably of Middle Pleistocene age.

The Newer Alluvium or *Khadar* is mostly confined to present day channels and contains less calcareous matter. The Newer Alluvium is of sub-Recent to Recent age and gradually merges into the deltaic flood plains.

Economic Geology

Building stones:—Fine-grained granites and Rajmahal Trap rocks are sometimes used for millstone. Granitic rocks are quarried near Panchra (23°46′: 87°20′) and Dubrajpur (23°48′: 87°22′). These are also available near Ranihabal (24°06′: 87°20′), Adarpur (24°01′: 87°31′) and from places in the vicinity, e.g. Kushkhaspur, Haridaspur, Chak Mukunda, Chuarili and Kurabali. These rocks are suitable for building purposes and are also used as railway ballast.

The sandstone, conglomerate and pebbles of Tertiary age occurring in the district are used for building purposes. The Tertiary gravels are suitable for aggregate in concrete mixes.

Laterite, occurring abundantly, is a cheap building material which can be easily quarried and dressed.

Large quantities of fresh trap rocks from the Rajmahal hills are used as road-metal and construction material. The quarries are located to the west of Rampurhat at Nalhati, Murarai and Rajgram railway stations.[1]

Gold

Gold, in association with such heavy minerals as monazite, ilmenite ($Fe\ TiO_3$), rutile (TiO_2), zircon ($ZrSiO_4$), magnetite (Fe_3O_4) etc., has been found in the Tertiary pebble beds of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Tertiary gravels and other sedimentary rocks (sandstones and shales), about 45.7 m. to 76.2 m. in thickness, occur in Birbhum, Burdwan, Bankura and Midnapur districts.[2] Recovery of gold from these ancient placers is dependent to a large degree upon a full appreciation of the past and present geomorphology of these littoral shelf deposits, namely the Tertiary pebble beds.[3] Early Tertiary streams were able to deposit important placers because they flowed down from the crystalline hinterland which had been almost peneplained, and apparently some stream courses were influenced by faults which localised the

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1 Source: Geological Survey of India.

2 Khedkar, V.R.R. — 'Gold in the Tertiary Basin of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa', in Indian Mining Journal, Vol. 2, No. 8. pp. 9-10.

3 W.D. Thornbury — Principles of Geomorphology, New York, 1962, pp. 567-68.

gold lodes. Eocene climate apparently was tropical or sub-tropical and this favoured deep chemical weathering and release of large quantities of gold. The problem of locating buried placers is, in the first place, one of reconstructing the early Tertiary bedrock topography and determining the positions of buried bedrock valleys; but this in itself is not enough, for the age of materials overlying the bedrock is significant as well. Gold placers are likely to be richest where there was slowing down of stream velocities. Thus on understanding of varying gradients, shape and size of the buried channels is also necessary. Lying at the apex of the Damodar Embayment (and hence nearer the primary lode deposit) Birbhum has more prospects for gold than Purulia, Bankura or Midnapur.

'oal

A small portion of the Raniganj Coalfield extends across the Ajay into Birbhum. The workable reserve of coal in the district has been estimated to be nearly 94 million tons. There is, however, no coking coal in the district. A much smaller field occurs around Tangsuli where seams are hardly workable.[1] Within the Trans-Ajay portion of the field lie the colliery groups of Poripur, Kasta, Arang, Raswan and the Hingla.[2] The known coal bearing areas of the Raniganj coalfield cover 1,500 sq. km. of which 115 sq. km., a narrow strip, lies to the north of the Ajay.[3] The extension of the field below the alluvium to the east has been proved by recent drilling carried out by the Geological Survey of India at Dubchururia (23°35′:87°14′), which is about 4 km. north-east of the Andal railway station. A large oblique strike fault following the Ajay river with a downthrow to the north-east is responsible for the preservation of the trans-Ajay Gondwanas (within the Archaean land mass) against the effects of weathering.[4] Only Barakar series containing thick Kasta and Paharpur seams is exposed in the Trans-Ajay Coalfield extending from Pariharpur (23°50′:87°03′) eastwards to Pajara (23°45′:87°19′). These coalfields were intruded by a large number of igneous intrusions comprising the dolteritic or basaltic dykes and ultrabasic mica peridotite and lamprophyre dykes and sills. These intrusives are probably the representatives of the volcanic activity which occurred during the post-Lower Gondwana period during the Jurassic time and manifested itself

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1 B. Ray — op. cit. p. 10.
2 A. Hunday & S. Banerjee—op. cit. p. 101.
3 ibid. p. 37.
4 ibid. pp. 38-39.

into the outpouring Rajmahal lava flows about 48 km. north of the Raniganj Coalfield in the Birbhum district. These dykes and sills have burnt the coal seams near their contacts producing *jhamas* much to the deterioration of the coal seams.[1] The principal collieries in the district are Bhadulia, Gangaramchak, Kankartala, Russa, Kasta Bengal, Amrang and Kumar Khola. The last named colliery started production from 1968 while Amrang ceased production since 1963. In 1962 the total production was 1,16,844 tonnes as compared with 81,899 tonnes in 1968. Kankartala is the most productive, but its output is dwindling.[2]

This district has long been known as an important centre of iron industry in Bengal. The ores in this region are derived from different formations: magnetite from the metamorphics near Namgulia; veins of limonite from the sandstones of the Damuda and Mahadeva series of the Gondwana system; layers of pisolitic iron-ore and pockets and thin beds of limonite and hematite from the laterite within flows of the Rajmahal trap (of Jurassic age) to the north of the district. Lateritic iron-ore is found capping the Archaeans, Gondwanas and the traps on the southern margin of the Rajmahal hills.

There are two or three seams of limonitic ore in the laterite.[3] Analyses of the ores showed that they contained 28 to 59 per cent iron, an average of 29 samples showing 43 per cent iron and 1.5 per cent P_2O_5.

The indigenous iron and steel industry was apparently more highly developed in Birbhum than almost anywhere else in India. The furnaces were comparatively large and the efficiency of the smelting operations was also much better than elsewhere. The iron was reduced to a really molten condition and the steel making process was a second operation which resembled 'puddling'. In 1852 there were about 70 furnaces at Deocha and other places each of which produced iron at a cost of Rs. 17 for 25 mds. in a single operation which lasted 4 complete days and nights. The annual output of each furnace was about 34 tons of iron (total of about 2,400 tons from all furnaces).

The history of iron making in this district has been dealt with in Chapter V.

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[1] ibid. pp. 41-42.
[2] Source: The Coal Controller, Government of India.
[3] V. Ball — 'Geology of the Rajmahal Hills' in Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. 13. Calcutta, 1877. pp. 155-248.

Kankar

Calcium carbonate concretions (*ghootings* or *ghusiks* or *Kankar*) which are fairly rich in lime content are reported to develop seasonally in the soils at various places in the trans-Ajay coalfield, in the Archaean tracts and in the alluvial plains. They are reported to have been used as a raw material in lime kilns since a long time. *Kankar* is formed by segregation of calcareous material into irregular lumps. With these calcareous concretions a certain amount of argillaceous matter is included and the proportion of this, in some cases, is such that, on burning, the *Kankar* produces a hydraulic lime or natural cement.[1]

Sands and gravels

There are two small deposits of quartz and felspar near Raspur and Kadirganj in Mahammad Bazar thana. These were quarried in the past for supplying glaze material to the Patelnagar Firebricks & Potteries Limited.[2]

The soil with grain size ranging from 0.5 to 5 mm. is generally classified as sand. Sands require some treatment before they are used for certain purposes. When a high degree of purity is required they may be sieved through a series of screens, and washed to remove clay materials, mica and organic matter. For the glass-industry (colourless glass) sands should have a proper grain size (0.4 mm.) and the iron oxide content should not exceed 0.02%. Inferior type of sand with about 1% FeO is commonly used for making green-glass. As glass-sands are rather rare, most of these sands are obtained from vein quartz, pure quartzite and pure friable sandstone, after pulverising these rocks. There are good occurrences of fairly pure-quartzite in the Birbhum district.

Sandstone in the Tangsuli basin near Suri may be investigated with a view to exploit it for the glass industry. Sand of the Ajay may be used for constructional purposes and for stowing in the collieries. An expert has estimated the total sand reserves as 1,091 million tonnes in the Damodar and the Ajay rivers within the specified areas in the Raniganj coalfield.[3]

Semi-precious stones:—Varieties of agate, chalcedony amethyst and rock crystal have been found in the amygdaloidal basalt and are used in jewellery. Greenish crystals of beryl are sometimes found in the mica-bearing pegmatites of the district.

Clays

The *terra cotta* plaques of Birbhum are renowned for centuries,

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[1] A. Hunday & S. Banerjee — op. cit. pp. 211-12.

[2] B. Ray — op. cit. p. 10.

[3] S. Banerjee 'Reserves of sand in the Damodar and the Ajay rivers within the Jharia and Raniganj Coalfields for stouring in collieries' in Proceedings of the Indian Science Congress Association, 47th Session. Pt. 3. Calcutta, 1960.

and are made from the local clays. Recent work of the Geological Survey of India has proved large deposits of good quality clays in Birbhum district.

Mahammad Bazar Area :—Large deposits of Tertiary clay have been reported from many parts of the district, especially around Mahammad Bazar. Clay beds 4.57 m. to 7.62 m. thick and extending to a depth of 15.24 m. or more occur below a variable thickness of laterite and lateritic gravels followed by iron-stained white clay and then white clay. The pale white clay with a pinkish tinge, gives 40% yield of pure Kaolin. This is one of the best plastic clays having water of plasticity at 34.5%, drying shrinkage at 110°C.-145°C., fired shrinkage at 10-12% at 1,250°C. and also 19% at 1,450°C. The clay is suitable for pottery and refractories. When mixed with 50% of Kharidungri clay it becomes suitable for any type of white ware including porcelain.

The extent of the clay bearing area here is 5,26,760 sq. m. with an estimated reserve of 14,40,180 tonnes. This clay is now being quarried for use in the rubber and fire-clay industries. It is mica free, and quartz forms the main bulk of the grit. They are high in alumina and low in silica.

A new township named Patelnagar has sprung up. Chalk and limestone are quarried in the neighbourhood and largely exported. The Khairakuri Ceramic Industries Private Ltd. was established in October 1965. It originally started under the name of Patelnagar Firebricks and Potteries Ltd. in 1960.

Kumarpur Area (*23°59′ : 87°35′E.*) :—The clay deposit is about 1.5 km. south-east of Mahammad Bazar, and has an extension of about four hectares. It is being worked by M/S. Indian Mineral & Associated Industries Ltd. The clay is found between 1.52 m. and 4.6 m. depth below the surface and continues down to a depth of 13.3 m. There are a few more quarries in the area covering a total of 29.4 hectares of land. The clay is siliceous, ferruginous and mica free. Deposits adjoining Mayurakshi sub-canal is the best. The Geological Survey of India has estimated the crude clay in this area at 6,34,640 tonnes down to a depth of 9 m. The deposit is promising and suitable for pottery, refractories (C.S.I.R., 1959), and paper industry. Though high in iron and titania, it may be used in the manufacture of attractive ivory coloured earthenwares, low and medium tension insulators and medium heat duty refractories. It is fairly plastic, pale cream in colour having 40 to 43% yield from crude clay. Fired colour at 1,250°C. is cream with 17-21% shrinkage and slight to fair

vitrification. Unwashed finely ground clay from this locality is sold to the Imperial Chemical Industries and the Indian Oxygen and Acetylene Co.; the former using it as a filler for the manufacture of insecticide.

Khoria area (23°59'N. : 87°36'E.):—The quarries are about 2.0 km. east of Mahammad Bazar. The clay bed extends for six metres in depth. The clay is fairly plastic, dull white to pinkish cream in colour having 32% yield from crude clay. The deposit is economic to work and is suitable for use in pottery, refractories and paper industry. The crude clay is white and mica free, and is being sold to Burn & Co. Ltd., Raniganj. This variety contains high amount of titania and is more ferruginous than the Kumarpur variety. When fired at 1,250°C., its colour is pale cream with 17-19% shrinkage and slight vitrification.

Angargaria (23°58'40"N. & 87°36'30"E.):—The clay occurs 1.8 to 2.4 m. below the surface adjoining the Mayurakshi subcanal, about 2.6 km. south-east of Mahammad Bazar. It is more ferruginous but fairly plastic with pure Kaolin around 35%. Fired colour is light cream at 1,300°C. with 18% shrinkage and slight sintering. The Bengal Ceramic Institute has found that these clays, besides being used in ceramics, may also be used in rubber, paint, textile and chemical industries either as sizing material or diluent or filler. The high plasticity is particularly advantageous in the textile industries.

Dewanganj (24°04'N. : 87°36'30"E.):—Clay occurs in Kaolinised Gondwana sandstones about 1.6 km. south-southeast of Dewanganj on the left bank of the Dwaraka. It is dull cream coloured, moderately plastic and shows 10% shrinkage, 17% absorption and white colour with no vitrification at 1,250°C. The deposit is suitable for white ware and refractories.

Deocha (24°02'N. : 87°35'E.):—The clay is of the same properties as that of Dewanganj and suitable for white ware and refractories.

Chaknurai (24°12'N. : 87°44'E.):—Clays occur at south of Chaknurai village, under a thin capping of laterite. The reserves are considerable. The material is lithomargic, dirty white in colour and fairly plastic. Fired at 1,400°C., its volume shrinkage is 28%, and it shows numerous cracks but is infusible.[1]

Detailed prospecting for clay deposits in the Shaikherdah-Makhdumnagar-Salak, Sursal, Chaubatta, Damra-Dharampur,

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[1] A. Hunday & S. Banerjee — op. cit. pp. 152-53.

Chandini-Siulbona-Masra, and Bartola sectors was started during 1962-63. A total reserve of over 21 million tonnes of clay has been estimated in all the sectors. In Shaikherdah-Makhdumnagar-Salak sector alone, a reserve of over 8 million tonnes of clay has been estimated in a block of 0.5 sq. km. where the maximum thickness of clay bearing sequence is proved to be over 35 metres.

West of Rampurhat, a considerable area has been proved to contain clay deposits. Two sectors, Baramasia-Chaknurai-Bhatina and Tumboni-Pursala, have been delineated and a reserve of 8 million tonnes of clay has been tentatively estimated in those two sectors.

During the 1964-65 season prospecting for clay aided by drilling was conducted in Maubeliya, Ganpur Digalgram, Ranipur, Chaknurai, Bhatina, Tambuni, Sialdanga, Adda, and Bhurkuna areas. The clay beds are of varying thickness up to a maximum of over 40 metres. The deposits at Chaubatta (Maubeliya), Chaknurai, Tambuni and Adda appear to be promising.

During 1965-66 season prospecting for China-clay deposits in Uska-Puratangram-Garipur; Maladihi-Angargaria; Purushottampur-Kabilpur; Kumarpur-Kharia; Khastagra-Saunsa-Kharbona; Jatla-Supalkunri and Chandidaspur sectors has been completed. A total reserve of 69.25 million tonnes of clay has been estimated in these sectors.[1]

ULTIMATE ANALYSIS (IN PER CENT) OF SOME OF THE BIRBHUM CLAYS[2]

Localities	SiO_2	Al_2O_3	Fe_2O_3	TiO_2	CaO	MgO	Alkalies	Loss on ignition
Mahammad Bazar (Proper)	44.31	36.97	2.11	0.80	0.22	0.26	0.90	14.34
Kumarpur (C. S. Plot No. 1409)	43.67	35.23	1.30	3.12	1.37	0.92	0.61	13.78
Kumarpur (C. S. Plot No. 934)	46.22	32.70	3.03	0.87	2.21	0.64	0.48	14.84
Kharia	43.72	35.12	2.30	3.84	0.64	0.11	0.62	13.61
Rajya-dharpur-Angargaria	44.20	35.15	2.50	2.93	0.88	0.25	0.50	13.61

[1] Source: Geological Survey of India.

[2] A. Hunday & S. Banerjee — op. cit. p. 154.

Mineral springs

A group of sulphurous springs, known as the Bakreswar Group of Springs (32°52′ N.: 87°02′ S.), are situated on the right bank of the Bakreswar stream, 1.6 km. south of Tantipara village. The approach to this area is by a 12 km. metalled road from Suri, the nearest town. Emergence of hot water and gases is noticed here at seven different spots aligned northeast-southwest, which probably is a granite gneise fissure.

The two important springs in this group are Agni Kunda and Brahma Kunda. The details are given below:

	Agni Kunda	Brahma Kunda
Temperature	71°C.	42°C.
Rate of flow	5,500 litres per hour	5,500 litres per hour
pH value	9.3	—
Mineral content total ions of mineral concentration	325.8 parts per million (ppm.)	—
Sulphate ions	26.0 ppm.	—
Chloride ions	85.0 ,,	—
Sodium ions	156.0 ,,	—
Calcium ions	8.0 ,,	—
Gaseous content CO_2	present	not observed
Hydrogen-Sulphide	present	not observed
Radons % (mMc per litre)	2,8085	0.7918
Therapeutic values	For both the springs: Cure for skin diseases, digestive disorders & rheumatism, and induces appetite.	

The temperature varies only moderately in different springs: pH varies from 8.6 to 9.3 and the maximum hydrogen sulphide about 2 ppm.

Radioactivity of these springs: Much of the curative property of the spring water, it is said, is due to the presence of the radioactive radon in solution, the radon being derived from the disintegration of thorium and uranium bearing minerals present in the rocks through which the waters circulate Argon has been detected in the gases being emitted from Agni Kunda. The waters of the Agni Kunda are strongly radioactive. The Brahma Kunda waters are feebly so.

The hot springs are regarded as a manifestation of divine power, and are frequented by barren women and women suffering from miscarriage. The *Pandas* (priests) assert their efficacy for bronchitis, phthisis, diabetes, and nearly every description of skin diseases.

Each hot spring is enclosed in a cistern 10 feet in depth and of dimensions ranging from a square of 9 feet to a rectangle of 75 by 30 feet. The name of the springs are Agni Kunda, Brahma Kunda, Setganga, Surya Kunda, Jiban Kunda, Bhairab Kunda, Saubhagya Kunda and Khar Kunda. The Government of West Bengal has developed this place as a tourist centre. Now the bathers are not allowed to descent to the holy waters of the cisterns; instead they are supplied piped water.

To the north of Nagar there is a small streamlet having its catchment in Mushabani (J.L.8) and running into the Siddheswari Nala at Tantloi. The bed of this streamlet along a stretch of 300 yards is full of hot springs. The water was found definitely hotter than that at Bakreswar on 30 March 1952 with the usual sulphurous smell.

Very close to the Nalhati town is a hillock, at the foot of which occurs a cold spring.

Hydrogeology

Water supply in the crystalline tracts is mainly derived from surface water. Dug-wells are generally shallow. These tap only localised water bodies collected in the cracks and crevices of the impervious rocks, and from the upper weathered zones of the bed rock. The area suffers from water scarcity. The Tertiary and Pleistocene deposits in the district are mostly covered by a variable thickness of laterite which sometimes overlaps some portions of the peneplained and highly weathered gneissic terrain. This laterite has generally clay beds at its base. In such regions, during the rainy season, the water level rises to the maximum and during summer it falls to the top of the clay bed. The rise and fall in the level of groundwater is very sharp, and there is always a steady outward discharge, away from the centre of the high land. Thus a large volume of water in the laterite cappings is discharged. In connection with oil-drilling at Bolpur an artesian structure was discovered which is now being utilised.

Earthquakes

According to previous workers such as R. Jones (1817), J. Everest (1831), D. H. Williams (1847), V. Ball (1881) and Oldham the entire Ganga plains extending from North Bihar through North Bengal to Assam can be considered to be susceptible to earthquakes. In the rocky parts in the western part of the State the

isoseismals are not likely to exceed VIII (Mercalli scale). Hence it would be better to build houses with earthquake proof designs in the alluvial plains south of the Himalayas. For larger structures like dams etc. in the western parts of Bengal, provision for an acceleration due to gravity amounting to about 1/10th should be made in the designs.[1]

FLORA

The vegetation of Birbhum District as a whole belongs to the tropical dry deciduous type with a few representatives of the evergreens occurring here and there. The natural covering of the tract is of secondary nature due to intensive hio-edaphic interferences. The net-work of canals of various irrigation projects has brought about 84% of the total land area under agriculture. Seasonal changes, which present mesic to xeric conditions during the course of a year, affect the growth of vegetation. Particularly in summer, the dry aspect of the general vegetation becomes prominent and the high lands of the district become parched, yellow and barren.

Botanical divisions and nature of vegetation

Botanically, the district can broadlv be divided into two zones. The first zone comprises the undulated high lands along the western part of the district. Although the soil erosion is acute in this lateritic area, several relict patches of Chotanagpur plateau forests are still to be found around Rajnagar, Mahammad Bazar, Hetampur and Suri. The vegetation of this region shows semi-arid nature and is similar to eastern Bihar. Species of scrubby thickets like *Acacia Bridelia, Buchanania, Caesalpinta, Calotropis, Capparis, Cassia, Feronia, Jatropha, Phyllanthus, Streblus, Tephrosia, Wendlandia, Zizyphus* and other plants of the laterite soil are common. Grooves of trees are rather scarce in the south-western parts of the district. The second zone consists of the flat alluvial plain in the south and east of the district. The vegetation of this tract is characteristic of the alluvial rice plain of Gangetic West Bengal. Species of *Ageratum Alysicarpus, Aponogeton, Cayratia, Commelina, Dopatrium, Drosera, Heliotropium, Indigofera, Ipomoea, Lantana, Leucas, Lindernia, Oldenlandia, Polygonum, Sida* etc. flourish well in this part of the district.

The common plants seen around the habitations in villages and towns are clumps of *babla* (*Acacia nilotica*), *bel* (*Aegle Marmelos*), *ata* (*Annona squamosa*), *kanthal* (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), *neem*

[1] Source: Geological Survey of India.

(*Azadirachta indica*), *bansh* (*Bambusae arundinacea*), *papaya* (*Carica papaya*), *amaltas* or *sondal* (*Cassia fistula*), *lebu* (*Citrus medica*), *bot* (*Ficus benghalensis*), *pakur* or *aswattha* (*F. religiosa*), *am* (*Mangifera indica*), *sajina* (*Moringa oleifera*), *amra* (*Spondias pinnata*), *jam* (*Syzygium cumini*), *tentul* (*Tamarindus indica*), *arjun* (*Terminalia arjuna*) and other arborescent species. Trees, planted on both sides of the road are *akasmoni* or *sonajhuri* (*Acacia auriculiformis*), *babla* (*A. nilotica*), *sirish* (*Albizzia lebbeck*), *gulmohar* (*Delonix regia*), *bot* (*Ficus benghalensis*), *aswattha* (*F. religiosa*), *am* (*Mangifera indica*), *karenja* (*Pongamia pinnata*), *segun* (*Tectona grandis*) etc. In hedges and on waste grounds and cultivated fields, species of *kunch* (*Abbus precatorius*), *vasaka* (*Adhatoda vasica*), *ankura* (*Alangium salvifolium*), *kanta nate* (*Amaranthus spinosus*), *gobura* (*Anisomeles indica*), *sial kanta* (*Argemone mexicana*), *kantajati* (*Barleria prionitis*), *lakchana* (*Biophytum sensitivum*), *akanda* (*Calotropis gigentea*), *nayantara* (*Catharanthus roseus*), *bhant* (*Clerodendrum viscosum*), *dhutura* (*Datura metel*), *dhol kalmi* (*Ipomoea fistula*), *lajjabati* (*Mimosa pudica*), *kantikari* (*Solanum surattense*), *kalke phul* (*Thevetia peruviana*), *nishinda* (*Vitex negundo*) grow abundantly. There is no extensive tract of grassland in the district. Species of *Desmostachya bipinnata, Eulaliopeis binata, Hackelochloa granularis, Heteropogen contortus, Paspalum scrobiculatum, Pennisetum pedicellatum, Pseudoraphis spinescens, Setaria tomentosa, Sporobolus diander* are common on pasture grounds and on waste lands surrounding the forests. Prominent species of sedges belong to the genera *Cyperus, Fleocharis, Fimbristylis, Scirpus* etc. Margins of tanks, bunds of paddy fields and marshes are inhabitated by a mixed community of aquatic and amphibious species: *kachuri pana* (*Eichhornia crassipes*), *kini* (*Eragrostis unioloides*), *jhanjhi* (*Hydrilla verticillata*). *Isha langulya* (*Hydrolea zeylanica*), *kulia khara* (*Hygrophila suriculata*), *Kalmi* (*Ipomoea aquatica*), *kesar dam* (*Ludwigia adscandens*), *susni* (*Marsilea minuta*), *nukha* (*Monochoria vaginalis*), *pani lajuk* (*Neptunia prostrata*), *shaluk* (*Nymphsa nouchali*), *taka pana* (*Pistia stratiotes*), several species of *pani marich* (*Polygonum* spp.), *Jhill mirich* (*Sphenoclea zeylanica*), *pani phal* (*Trapa natens*), *janjhi* (*Utricularia aurea*) and others. The existing forest of the district is composed of *sal* (*Shorea Robusta*) as the principal species over the lateritic zone with mixed growths of *haldu* or *dacum* (*Adina cordifolia*), *pial* (*Buchanania lanzan*), *palas* (*Butea monosperma*), *parshi* (*Cleistanthus collinus*), *gabdi* (*Cochlospermum religiosum*), *kend* (*Diospyros*

melanoxylon), *sidha* (*lagerstroemia parviflora*), *mahua* (*Madhuca indica*), *pea sal* or *murga* (*Pterocarpus marsuplum*), *bhela* (*Semecarpus anacardium*) as the main associates. The ground flora consists mainly of common herbaceous species including some rare ones.

The district has certain picturesque charm of its own. The preponderance of annuals, which come up with the rains, presents a splendid vista of green sloping high lands together with the vast stretches of green rice fields. The predominant rofty stands of *tal* (*Borassus flabellifer*) and *khejur* (*Phoenix sylvestris*) with the crown of their leaves, add conspicuous beauty to the landscape. The elegant and compact formation of *arjun* (*Terminalia arjuna*) on banks of numerous streams, is characteristic of the district. The graceful *chhatim* (*Alstonia scholaris*) and the drooping golden yellow floral heads of *akasmoni* or *sonajhuri* (*Acacia auriculiformis*) and *babla* (*A. nilotica*) often put forth delightful sights. The red blossoms of *palas* (*Butea monosperma*) and *simul* (*Bombax ceiba*) present brilliant spectacle in spring. The flowers of *sirish* (*Albizzia lebbeck*), *bakul* (*Mimusops elengi*), *mahua* (*Madhuca indica*), *sajina* (*Moringa oleifera*) and *muchkunda* or *kanakchampa* (*Pterospermum acerifolium*) frequently fill the atmosphere with mild fragrance. The long canopy of tall trees along the metalled roads in the valley of the river Mor and selected varieties of trees and shrubs, planted around Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, also draw the attention of visitors. The general vegetation of the district finds an ample place in some popular works in Bengali by eminent composers like Rabindra Nath Tagore and Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay.

An analysis of the flora of the district reveals certain interesting phytogeographical relationships. A large number of rare plants got introduced in the district from its adjoining areas and form new records for the State of West Bengal. While certain species like *Acampe praemorsa, Jatropha heynei, Mitrasacme pygmaes var. malaccensis, Oldenlandia umbellata* and *Sphaeromorphaea russeliana* extended to the district from the Peninsular India, some Himalayan species like *Hypericum japonicum, Atylosia volubilis, Genotheca ovatifolia, Synnema uliginosum* succeeded in spreading in Birbhum through North Bengal and Bihar. The report of *Ophioglossum nudicaule var. macrorrhizum* from Birbhum is also noteworthy. The ten principal families according to their number of species are in the following order: *Leguminosae, Gramineae, Euphorbiaceae, Compositae, Cyperaceae, Rubiaceae, Acanthaceae,*

Convolvulaceae, *Scrophulariaceae* and *Verbenaceae*. Some dominant genera represented by 5 or more species are: *Acacia, Blumea, Cassia, Crotalaria, Cyperus, Euphorbia, Ficus, Fimbristylis, Ipomoea, Jatropha, Lindernia* and *Solanum*.

Economic plants

Apart from the principal types of food and cash crops — rice, wheat, maize, potato, sugarcane, jute, pulses, oil seeds and vegetables — the Birbhum district also produces several other important economic plants. The district is particularly rich in medicinal plants. Some common ones, which are exploited as indigenous drugs and form articles of trade are *vasaka* (*Adhatoda vasica*), *kalmegh* (*Andrographis paniculata*), *isharmul* (*Aristolochia indica*), *satamul* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *nata* (*Caesalpinia crista*), *keu* (*Costos speciosus*), *barun* (*Crataeva nurvala*), *kesuti* (*Eclipta protrata*), *anantamul* (*Hemideomus indicus*), *kurchi* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*), *kamala* (*Mallotus philippensis*), *siuli* (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*), *babui tulsi* (*Ocimum basilicum*), *nasabhanga* (*Peristrophe bicalyculata*), *sarpagandha* (*Rauvolfia serpentina, R. tetraphylla*), *rehri* (*Ricinus communis*), *kantikari* (*Solanum surattense*), *tentul* (*Tamarindus indica*), *arjun* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *bahera* (*T. belerica*), *haritaki* (*T. chebula*), *gulancha* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) etc. The majority of these drugs come from the forests. The *pan* (*Piper betel*) is cultivated for its leaves which are favourites as masticatory and are used in Ayurvedic medicine. There is quite a variety of timbers in Birbhum, used for agricultural and household work. Among the most prominent are *bahul* (*Acacia nilotica*), *haldu* or *dacum* (*Adina cordifolia*), *sirish* (*Albizzia lebbeck*), *kadam* (*Anthocephalus cadamba*), *simul* (*Bombax ciaba*), *smaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), *sissoo* (*Dalbergia sissoo*), *gamar* (*Gmelina arborea*), *sidha* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), *jiyal* (*Lannea coromandelica*), *am* (*Mangifera indica*), *sal* (*Shorea robusta*), *segun* (*Tectona grandis*), *asan* (*Terminalia tomentosa*), *pitali* (*Trewia polycarpa*), and many others. The *kanthal* (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), *tal* (*Borassus flabellifer*), *am* (*Mangifera indica*) and *jam* (*Syzygium cumini*) form the popular natural fruit trees of Birbhum. The *bel* (*Aegle marmelos*), *ata* (*Annona squamosa*), *pial* (*Buchanania lanzan*), *papaya* (*Carica papaya*), *piara* (*Psidium guajava*), *kul* (*Zizyphus mauritiana*) also grow abundantly. The recent introduction of *kaju* or *hijli badam* (*Anacardium occidentale*) in the district has been found to be promising. The trees of *babla* (*Acacia nilotica*), *palas* (*Butea monosperma*), *bot* (*Ficus benghalensis*), *aswattha* (*F. religiosa*), *kusum* (*Schleichera oleosa*) and *kul* (*Zizyphus mauritiana*) are

raised for tiny lac insects to leave resinous incrustation on their soft branches. The *tunt* (*Morus alba*) is commonly cultivated in Bhadrapur, Boswa-Bishnupur, Ganutia and their neighbouring areas to feed silk-worms. Several species of *sisal* (*Agave spp.*) are grown on a large scale near Rajnagar.

Forest belts

The forests of Birbhum district occupy an area of 137 sq. km. which is only 3% of the total land available as against the national forest policy resolution of having at least 20% of the area under forest cover in the plains. The forests are usually distributed in scattered patches in between the stretches of barren waste lands or fallow fields along the western fringe of the district. They are located in Nalhati, Rampurhat, Mahammad Bazar, Suri, Rajnagar, Khayrasol, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar and Bolpur police stations. The forests may be classified as lateritic forests, which include *sal* forest of about 116 sq. km. and miscellaneous forest of about 21 sq. km. These areas have again many blanks inside and it is reported that an area of about 26 sq. km. has little or no trees. Thus the effective forest area is reduced to 11 sq. km. only.

The old records of Birbhum make an intersting study on depletion of forests. The history is one of continuous destruction during the last two centuries. Although no estimate of actual forest area in the 18th century is available, the old records show that the area under cultivation was small, the population sparse and there was much jungle covering extensive tracts. There are even reports of ravages of elephants in 52 villages.

With the introduction of Permanent Settlement, forests were gradually cut to bring land under cultivation. The practice of keeping land fallow and unscientific land management led to severe erosion. This is clear from the following table.[1]

Year	Total area (acres)	Total culti-vated area (acres)	Cultivable land inclu-ding fallows (acres)	Total of column 3 & 4	Area not available for cultivation (acres)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1924-32	11,15,402	7,68,900	1,61,308	9,30,208	1,85,194
1946-47	11,15,300	7,26,900	2,79,300	10,08,200	1,09,100
Differences	(—) 102	(—) 42,000	(+)1,17,992	(+) 77,992	(—) 76,094

Though the total of cultivated lands (3) and cultivable land including fallows (4) increased from 1924-32 to 1946-47 by 77.992

1 Nandan Sarkar — 'Note on the impact of forestry and soil conservation works on the rural economy of Birbhum district and the scope of future development', in Proceedings of Symposia, West Bengal Forest Centenary 1964. Calcutta, 1966. pp. 54-55.

acres, the total cultivated area shows a fall by 42,000 acres in the corresponding period.

Thus, extension of cultivation at the cost of forest belts had been positively harmful to the district's economy. The decay of several forest based industries, e.g. lac at Ilambazar is a further proof. Vast tracts of high dense *sal* forests are now reduced to derelict coppice growth of *sal* with the varying admixture of mostly low graded species. The forests are really scrubby and degraded except for about 26 sq. km. which are of proper stocking and quality. The biggest area of forest that has been left is Chaupahari jungle having an area of about 14 sq. km. under the Ilambazar police station. Other notable spots are Canpur, Kasthagora, Baidyanathpur, Kachujore, Asansoli, Rajnagar jungles and their adjoining formations. Plantations in Birbhum Division were started from 1949, initially in the acquired waste lands and subsequently in the bank areas within the vested private forests. By 1964, 8,065 acres had been planted out of which 1,313 acres failed due to fire and grazing, leaving 6,752 acres of successful plantations of *Shorea robusta, Acacia auriculiformis, Cassia siamea, Pterocarpus marsupium, Dalbergia sissoo, Terminalia belerica, Tectona grandis, Eucalyptus, Bamboo* and *Sabai*. Also about 70% of the major forest areas were brought under soil conservation measures.[1] The district is divided into five Forest Ranges as follows: Bolpur, Suri, Rajnagar, Mahammad Bazar and Rampurhat. The total forest area of 155 sq. km in 1969 had the following legal status:[2]

Reserved forests	26.40 sq. km.
Protected forests	36.08 „ „
Unclassed forests	87.70 „ „
Other forests	6.81 „ „

Ecology of Forest types

The forest vegetation of Birbhum district in general conforms to 'Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous—Dry *Sal* (4b/C2)' of Champion's classification of Forest Types of India. It is essentially tropophilous, exhibiting marked erophytic tendency. Because of the low rainfall, the dry nature of climate and the highly porous eroded soil, the forests are poor in large-size timber content. The forests are of open park land type, in which trees grow in groups separated by scrubby under-growths. In summer, the forests

1 Nandan Sarkar—op. cit, p. 56.
2 Source: Divisional Forest Officer, Birbhum.

become almost leafless and the ground surface is fully exposed to the blaze of the sun. However, in the monsoon period they present a luxuriant appearance due to the growth of ephemeral species and green foliages of perennial forms.

The top canopy in the forest area is represented predominantly by *sal* (*Shorea robusta*). It forms extensive reserve in all forests. The usual associates of *sal* are *khair* (*Acacia catechu*), *haldu* or *dacum* (*Adina cordifolia*), *khudi jamb* (*Antideema ghaesembilla*), *simul* (*Bombax ceiba*), *pial* (*Buchanania lanzan*), *palas* (*Butea monosperma*), *gabdi* (*Cochlospermum religiosum*), *kend* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *amlaki* (*Emblica officinalis*), *gamar* (*Gmelina arborea*), *sidha* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), *mahua* (*Madhuca indica*), *kamala* (*Mallotus philippensis*), *sona* (*Oroxylum indicum*), *pea sal* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), *bhela* (*Semecarpur anacardium*), *kusum* (*Scleichera oleosa*), *rehan* (*Soymida febrifuga*), *arjun* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *bahera* (*T. belerica*), *haritaki* (*T. chebula*) and others.

The undergrowths of the forests and their outskirts, usually contain species of *jati* (*Barleria cristata*), *geio* or *kantakoi* (*Bridelia squamosa*), *karanda* (*Carissa spinarum*), *bhai birrung* (*Embelia tsjariancottam*), *parshi* (*Cleistanthus collinus*), *bincha* (*Flacourtia indica*), *kurchi* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*), *sakina* (*Indigofera pulchella*), *rangan* (*Ixora arborea*), *champa baha* (*Ochna obtusata var. pumila*), *kokoaru* (*Olax scandens*), *pind khejur* (*Phoenix scaulis*), *chakulia* (*Uraria lagopodioides*), *dhai* (*Woodfordia fruticosa*), *moyena* (*Xeromphis spinosa*), *kul* (*Zizyphus mauritiana*), *siakul* (*Z. oenoplia*) etc. In the forests of Deucha, Dhamara and Chanda areas, thickets of thorny scrubs are met with frequently. Some of the common lianes and climbers of the forest regions are *satamul* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *lata palas* or *bandan* (*Butea parviflora*), *anantamul* (*hemidesmus indicus*), *dudhi lata* (*Ichnocarpus frutescens*), *alkusi* (*Mucuna prurita*), *kumarika* (*Smilax zeylanica*) and giant *Dioscorea* spp. Parasites and hemi-parasites like *akasbel* (*Cassytha filiformis*), *sarna lata* (*Cuscuta reflexa*) and *bara manda* (*Dendrophthoe falcata*) are found in plenty. Epiphytes and ferns are rare and are represented by *rasna* (*Vanda roxburghii*), *nanha* (*Cheilanthus tenuifolia*), *bhut raj* (*Lygodium flexuosum*) and a few others.

The Birbhum forests yield mostly *sal* poles of low quality. The supply of timbers from other tree species is very limited. A good amount of firewood is collected from the forests to meet local demand. Some minor forest products like *bidi* leaves, *sal* leaves,

mahua flowers, *pial* fruits, grasses and fodder provide means of livelihood to people in forest areas.

Broad effects of Government forest policy on the flora of the district

The forests of the district have been much destroyed. The need for greater food production has led to the ruthless destruction of forest lands. The cumulative effect of unrestricted grazing, randum felling and fires has resulted in the gradual removal of soil cover and its fertility. This is particularlv true for the vested private forests and waste lands, which were later acquired through the Estates Acquisition Act of 1933. Recently, intensive soil and water conservation measures and afforestation work have been taken up by the Forest Department. Quick growing species like *sonajhuri* (*Acacia auriculiformis*), *mahanim* (*Ailanthus excelsa*), *kaju* (*Anacaridum occidentale*), *minjari* (*Cassia siamea*), *Eucalyptus hybrids* and *boga* (*Tephrosia candida*) are being raised primarily for pulp wood and for temporary soil cover. Several successful plantations of *sissoo* (*Dalbergia sissoo*), *pea sal* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), *sal* (*Shorea robust*) and *segum* (*Tectona grandis*) are valuable additions to the timber crops of the district. All these are gradually replacing the *sal* coppice stools and failed plantations in different areas. An extensive afforestation work along the canal banks of the district is also in progress. It is thus expected that forestry and soil conservation work will have a lasting effect on the rural economy of the district.[1]

In 1969 the total forest area of the district was 38,298.00 acres or 155 sq. km. The progress of afforestation work in the district is as follows:

Prior to First Plan	—	88.0	Hectares
First Five Year Plan	—	1,015.0	„
Second Five Year Plan	—	1,219.0	„
Third Five Year Plan	—	531.0	„
1966-67 Plan	—	162.0	„
1967-68 Plan	--	136.0	„
1968-69 Plan	—	142.0	„
1969-70 Plan	—	142.0	„
Total	—	3,435.0	„

During 1954-55 the value of the principal forest products of Birbhum was only Rs. 1,830. This figure increased to Rs. 73,023 during 1967-68, a forty-fold increase in 12 years.[2]

1 Source: The Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta.
2 Source: Divisional Forest Officer, Birbhum.

Soil conservation measures have been taken up since 1961-62 in derelict forest areas by digging contour trenches to facilitate absorption of water by the soil and to stimulate growth of the plant. The increasing soil moisture also promotes heavier undergrowth which in turn checks soil erosion. Forest fire and grazing are also controlled to some extent by digging cattle proof trenches along the boundary of the forests. The total area of the degraded forests, brought under soil conservation measures up to the year 1966-67, was 4,930 hectares.

About 2,400 labourers are engaged on an average per month for afforestation and soil conservation work. Besides this, about 500 labourers on an average are engaged by the lot purchasers of forest produce for felling etc. during the six months from October to March. About 28,000 metric tonnes of firewood and 3,000 metric tonnes of timber (mainly *sal* poles) are obtained from the Lots sold each year.

With repeated cutting of *sal*, much of the forests have given way to *kend* and *mahua* (which are seldom out). In the first stage of retrogression *sal* is also replaced by *sidha* and *parasi* in places, which in its turn gives way to *kend*. *Palas* is also associated with this stage of retrogression. Rahara is associated with heavy clay soil, usually characterised by the calcareous nodules. Cleistanthus is associated with a rather dry type of soil usually the rocky areas, but *palas* and *kend* are rather cosmopolitan in the matter of habitat. Before the last stage of disappearance of vegetal cover *Combretum decandrum*, *Streblus asser* and lately *Lantalacamera* are often seen to take over the control. These degraded forests are being planted with valuable timber and pulp wood species.

Measures undertaken for the preservation of fauna in the Birbhum forests

Hardly any wild life existed in the scrubby degraded forest of Birbhum district except a very small number of partridges and one or two leopards when Government took possession of the forest. As soon as the Government exercised control over the forest in this district, the entire forest area was declared closed to hunting, shooting, fishing and capture and killing of all wild animals and birds except wild pigs, bears and leopards.

In addition to this, the Forest Directorate has established a Deer Park over an area of 100 acres in Bolpur and has introduced some species of deer there, the number of which are increasing under strict protection.

FAUNA

Zoological types found in the district

The carnivora of the district consists of leopards, bears, wolves and other smaller species. The ungualata are represented by wild pigs. Leopards are not numerous, but are found in some jungles, chiefly in the Chaupahari jungle in thana Ilambazar, and in the Charicha jungle. Bears are very rare, but sometimes they migrate from the neighbouring hills in the Santal Parganas, and visit the country to the west of Rajnagar, when the *mahua* trees are in flower. Wolves are sometimes met with in small patches of jungle; their depredations are mainly confined to cattle, sheep and goats. Wild pigs are found in isolated tracts, especially along river banks and in jungles traversed by watercourses. They are mostly killed by Santals during their great annual hunts or drives in the dry weather. Besides the above, the long-tailed ape called *hanuman* (*Semnopithecus entellus*), otters, hares, foxes and jackals are common; in some parts of the district the *hanuman* does considerable damage to growing crops, as well as to the thatch of houses.[1]

At Labhpur before presenting rice *bhog* to the goddess Phullera, a portion of it is given to the jackals, which are quite tame and advance without hesitation from the adjoining jungle, answering to the call of the name Rupi-Supi. The remainder of the food left by the jackals is taken as *prasad*.[2]

At one time the district was subject to the ravages of wild elephants as is proved by the report of the Collectors at the time of the Permanent Settlement. In 1790 it was reported that in 2 parganas 56 villages had all been destroyed and overgrown with jungle through the depredations of wild elephants, while an official return stated that 40 market towns had been destroyed in a similar way. No wild elephant, however, was noticed within about a century.[3]

Game birds

The game birds of the district chiefly consist of partridges, green pigeons and various water-fowls. The grey partridge is plentiful, and green pigeons may usually be seen on the highest branches of *pipal* trees when they are bearing fruit. Among the water-fowls, the comb and Brahmani ducks are found in abundance. Geese are cold weather visitors, coming in large flocks to feed on the rice crops. Snipes are found in great numbers in the swampy places and in the beds of rivers, and are most common in the east of the district.

1 L.S.S. O'Malley — op. cit. p. 6.
2 B. Ray — op. cit. p. 110.
3 ibid. p. 12.

Fish

The principal rivers of the district, the Ajay and the Mor, contain *rui*, *katla* and sometimes *hilsa*. Tanks, which are numerous in the district, are stocked with *rui*, *katla*, *mrigel*, *magur*, *koi*, and other small fish. Alligators have been seen in tanks near Mayureswar.[1]

CLIMATE

The climate of this district, is characterised by an oppressive hot summer, high humidity and well distributed rainfall during the monsoon. The cold weather from about the middle of November to the end of February is followed by summer from March to May. The south-west monsoon lasts from June to September. October and the first half of November constitute the post monsoon season.

Rainfall

Records of rainfall in the district are available for eight stations for periods ranging from 23 to 102 years. The details of the rainfall at these eight stations and for the district as a whole are given in tables 1 and 2. The average annual rainfall in the district is 1,303.7 mm. (51.33"). The rainfall during the monsoon months June to September constitutes about 78 per cent of the annual rainfall. The rainfall in the district in general decreases from the north-west towards the south-west. The variation in the rainfall from year to year is not large. In the fifty year period (1901 to 1950) the highest annual rainfall amounting to 140 per cent of the normal occurred in 1917 while 1940 was the year with the lowest annual rainfall which was 68 per cent of the normal. In the same fifty year period the rainfall was less than 80 per cent of the normal in six years, two of them being consecutive. Considering the rainfall at the individual stations, annual rainfall less than 80 per cent of the normal in 2 consecutive years occurred once or twice at three out of the 8 stations. At Bolpur, five consecutive years of such low rainfall occurred during 1919 to 1923. It will be seen from table 2 that the annual rainfall in the district was between 1,100 and 1,600 mm. (43.31" and 62.99") in 34 out of 49 years.

On an average there are 69 rainy days (i.e. days with rainfall of 2.5 mm. — 10 cents — or more) in a year in the district. This number varies from 61 at Mayureswar to 78 at Suri.

The heaviest rainfall recorded in 24 hours at any station in the district was 673.1 mm. (26.50") at Suri on July 1, 1866.

Temperature

The district has a meteorological observatory at Suri. As the records of this station are available only for a few years, the

1 L.S.S. O'Malley—op. cit., loc. cit.

description of the climate that follows is based on the available records at this observatory and those of the observatories in the neighbouring districts where the climatic conditions are similar. Temperatures begin to rise rapidly from about the beginning of March. May is the hottest month with the mean daily maximum temperature of 39.7°C. (103.5°F.) and the mean daily minimum of 26.3°C. (79.3°F.). The heat in summer is oppressive. The maximum temperature during the period April to the early part of June sometimes rises to 45 or 46°C. (113.0 or 114.8°F.). There is a welcome relief from the heat, though temporarily, when thunder-showers occur on some days in this season. With the advance of the south-west monsoon into the district early in June the day temperatures drop appreciably but the night temperatures remain nearly as high as in the summer months. Due to the continuing high night temperatures, with the increased humidity in the air, the weather during the monsoon season is often uncomfortable in between the rains. With the withdrawal of the monsoon by about the first week of October the temperatures begin to drop. The drop particularly in the night temperatures is more rapid from about the middle of November. January is the coldest month with the mean daily maximum temperature of 25.4°C. (77.7°F.) and the mean daily minimum of 12.9°C. (55.2°F.). In association with passing western disturbances spells of colder weather are experienced in the winter season. The minimum temperature may then occasionally go down to about 6 or 7°C. (42.8 or 44.6°F.).

The highest maximum temperature recorded at Suri was 46.1°C. (115.0°F.) on May 27, 1958 and the lowest minimum was 6.7°C. (44.1°F.) on January 24, 1956.

Humidity

The air is highly humid throughout the south-west monsoon season. Thereafter the relative humidity decreases progressively. The driest part of the year is the summer season, with average relative humidity of about 45 per cent in the mornings and about 20 to 25 per cent in the afternoons. Later relative humidity increases with the progress of the season.

Cloudiness

Skies are moderately clouded in May and heavily clouded to overcast in the south-west monsoon season. Cloudiness decreases in October and the skies are clear or lightly clouded during the rest of the year.

Winds

Winds are generally light or moderate with a slight increase in force during the summer and monsoon seasons. Winds blow mostly from directions between the south and east in May and

in the south-west monsoon season. Winds are light and variable in October, and blow mainly from directions between west and north in the cold season. In March and April they are mostly between south and north-west.

Special weather phenomena

Storms and depressions from the Bay of Bengal in May and the post monsoon season often reach the district and its neighbourhood and cause widespread heavy rain with high winds. Depressions in the monsoon season also affect the district and heavy rains occur. During the hot season thunderstorms occur mostly in the afternoons. Associated with them are heavy rains, occasional hail and severe squalls. These thunderstorms called 'norwesters' are locally known as *kalbaisakhi* and the squalls associated with them usually come from the north-west. A sharp drop in temperature is experienced during these storms. Rain during the monsoon season is also often associated with thunder. Fogs occur occasionally during the winter.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 give the temperature and relative humidity, mean wind speed and special weather phenomena respectively for Suri.

TABLE 1

Normals and Extremes of Rainfall

Station	No. of years of data	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual	Highest annual rainfall as % of normal & year**	Lowest annual rainfall as % of normal & year**	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours* Amount (mm.)	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours* Date
Suri	50 a	11.4	24.1	24.9	29.5	98.3	231.4	325.4	328.7	214.4	95.8	13.7	2.3	1399.9	165 (1917)	56 (1940)	673.1	1866 Jul. 1
	b	1.2	2.2	1.8	2.5	5.9	11.5	17.3	17.6	11.8	5.1	0.9	0.2	78.0				
Hetampur	48 a	14.7	23.9	20.6	24.9	91.7	213.6	335.0	316.0	196.6	95.8	17.0	3.1	1352.9	153 (1917)	63 (1927)	390.1	1875 Jun. 13
	b	1.1	2.0	1.7	2.2	5.7	11.7	17.8	16.7	10.7	4.3	1.0	0.3	75.2				
Rampurhat	50 a	10.9	20.6	19.6	39.9	124.2	227.6	300.7	332.0	232.7	109.0	15.2	4.3	1436.7	142 (1941)	62 (1935)	250.9	1888 Aug.15
	b	1.0	1.7	1.4	2.7	5.8	11.1	15.8	16.5	11.4	4.7	0.9	0.3	73.3				
Bolpur	50 a	10.9	20.3	18.0	29.2	92.2	206.8	279.9	288.3	172.5	89.9	15.7	2.5	1226.2	152 (1933)	39 (1912)	173.0	1943 Jul. 16
	b	0.8	1.6	1.4	2.3	5.2	10.3	14.0	14.9	9.3	4.2	0.8	0.2	65.0				
Murarai	49 a	12.5	14.5	27.7	28.2	112.3	244.3	332.5	311.4	238.0	91.9	12.7	1.3	1427.3	179 (1919)	57 (1927)	421.6	1902 Sep. 10
	b	0.9	1.2	1.5	2.2	5.2	10.3	14.5	14.7	10.6	3.7	0.6	0.1	65.5				
Labhpur	47 a	9.1	16.5	20.6	34.3	101.6	197.9	276.6	281.2	177.3	94.0	15.2	1.5	1225.8	150 (1905)	50 (1940)	360.4	1956 Sep. 25
	b	0.8	1.4	1.5	2.4	5.2	10.3	14.0	13.8	8.9	4.2	0.7	0.2	63.4				
Nalhati	16 a	5.1	9.1	6.9	27.2	62.2	169.4	209.5	326.4	156.0	82.5	13.7	2.3	1070.3	146 (1942)	69 (1935)	137.2	1941 Oct. 9
	b	0.6	1.0	1.1	2.9	5.1	11.4	13.1	17.5	9.6	4.1	0.7	0.1	67.2				
Mayureswar	14 a	9.7	9.9	12.9	46.7	94.7	175.5	347.7	307.1	165.9	106.2	13.7	1.0	1291.0	160 (1949)	68 (1935)	160.0	1944 Jul. 2 & 1945 Oct. 21
Suri	b	1.1	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.4	8.7	13.3	13.7	9.9	3.7	0.5	0.1	60.6				
(District)	a	10.5	17.4	18.9	32.5	97.1	208.3	300.9	311.4	194.2	95.6	14.6	2.3	1303.7	140 (1917)	68 (1940)		
	b	0.9	1.5	1.4	2.5	5.3	10.7	15.0	15.7	10.3	4.3	0.8	0.2	68.6				

(a) Normal rainfall in mm. (b) Average number of rainy days (days with rain of 2.5 mm. or more).
*Based on all available data up to 1956.
**Years given in brackets.

TABLE 2

Frequency of Annual Rainfall in the District

(Data 1901-1950)

Range in mm.	No. of years	Range in mm.	No. of years
701- 800	0	1301-1400	8
801- 900	1	1401-1500	8
901-1000	4	1501-1600	5
1001-1100	3	1601-1700	5
1101-1200	6	1701-1800	1
1201-1300	7	1801-1900	1

Data for 49 years only

TABLE 3

Normals of Temperature and Relative Humidity

(SURI)

Month	Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	Highest Maximum ever recorded		Lowest Minimum ever recorded		Relative Humidity	
	°C	°C	°C	Date	°C	Date	0830	1730*
January	25.4	12.0	31.1	1955 Jan. 12	6.7	1956 Jan. 24	63	47
February	28.2	14.4	35.0	1960 Feb. 29	8.3	1956 Feb. 7	51	32
March	33.9	19.7	41.1	1955 Mar. 26	12.7	1957 Mar. 1	46	26
April	39.0	24.0	44.6	1960 Apr. 18	17.8	1955 Apr. 9	43	21
May	39.7	26.3	46.1	1958 May 27	19.4	1956 May 22	57	35
June	35.5	26.0	45.4	1958 Jun. 3	20.0	1955 Jun. 2	76	65
July	32.1	25.5	38.2	1958 Jul. 8	22.0	1960 Jul. 4	83	79
August	32.1	25.6	36.6	1960 Aug. 4	22.8	1955 Aug. 16	84	80
September	31.7	25.1	34.9	1957 Sep. 29	20.6	1956 Sep. 27	83	80
October	31.1	22.9	35.5	1957 Oct. 10	17.0	1957 Oct. 31	77	74
November	28.3	17.0	31.4	1957 Nov. 6	12.1	1960 Nov. 23	64	57
December	26.1	13.3	29.6	1957 Dec. 10	7.8	1955 Dec. 28	63	50
Annual	31.9	21.1					66	45

*Hours I.S.T.

TABLE 4

Mean Wind Speed in km./hr.

(SURI)

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
5.9	6.9	8.5	10.3	12.1	10.7	9.1	7.6	7.2	5.5	5.4	5.6	7.9

TABLE 5

Special Weather Phenomena

(SURI)

Mean No. of days with	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	July.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
Thunder	0.5	0.5	1.2	1.2	3.5	3.2	1.8	4.2	4.7	1.5	0.0	0.2	22.5
Hail	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Dust-Storm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
Squall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fog	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

PRE-HISTORY & PROTO-HISTORY

Before proceeding to describe the pre-historic and proto-historic archaeological finds from the district, it would be necessary to know the geological context. The older alluvial deposits (as has been pointed out in the preceding Chapter) cover approximately four-fifths of Birbhum district. The older alluvium is coarse and generally of reddish colour containing abundant disseminations of calcareous and limonite concretions. What is more important for our purpose here is that, this alluvium is of Middle Pleistocene age. Laterites of the late Miocene age occur as capping substance over basalts and older Tertiary formations whenever they are found in *situ;* where not, lateritic gravels, over or within the Tertiary sequence, are presumed to be detrital in origin. Lateritic clay occurs at low levels and shows stratification.[1]

Early & Middle Stone Age

Birbhum district, unlike the neighbouring Bankura district, has so far yielded a very small amount of Early Palaeolithic artefacts. The only place in the district from where certain specimens of Early Palaeolithic artefacts have been found is Jibdharpur (P.S. Suri).[2] In 1963 an exploration team from the Archaeological Survey of India, Eastern Circle, found four hand-axes from the eroded embankment of a small tributary of the Mayurakshi river. In the absence of stratigraphic data and associated floral and faunistic data, it is hard to say whether these artefacts were made by the Pleistocene men or not. Besides this difficulty, another fact also makes it difficult to construct any hypothesis about the possible chronology of this hand-axe culture.[3] The difficulty relates to the finding of some flake tools of the Middle Stone Age and some Late Stone Age microlithic implements from the same

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1 Source: Geological Survey of India, vide the report enclosed with the letter No. 4924K/DG(WB)/68/40, dated the 7th June 1969.

2 Indian Archaeology: A Review, 1963-64. New Delhi. Information about the number of hand-axes recovered, was supplied by Paresh Chandra Das Gupta, Director of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal (November 1969).

3 The Congress of Asian Archaeology, in New Delhi, in 1961, decided to classify the Palaeolithic period in the Indian context into three divisions: the Early, associated with the hand-axe industry; the Middle, with the flake industry and the Late Stone Age with the microlithic industry. Cf. B. & R. Allchin — The Birth of Indian Civilization. London, 1968. p. 28.

locality. Since all these artefacts have been found from the surface, there are no associated stratigraphic data. In the absence of such data it is impossible to say whether the hand-axes chronologically preceded the flake tools and the microliths, or whether the flake tools preceded the microliths, or whether some of these tools and implements of different technological stages were chronologically contemporaneous.

Besides Jibdharpur where flake tools of the Middle Stone Age were found along with hand-axes of the Early Stone Age and microlithic implements of the Late Stone Age, flake tools were found from the eroded bank of the Brahmani river near Nalhati. Some pebble tools were also discovered from the same area.[1] Flake tools were also found from Devi Lalaṭeswari hillock in Nalhati.[2] Middle Stone Age flake tools were also found from John Cheap's Kuthi area on way from Santiniketan to Sriniketan, Syambati to the north of Visva-Bharati University campus in Santiniketan, Giridanga within Dubrajpur thana's jurisdiction (microliths have also been found from these places).[3] Some waste flakes and microliths have been found from the surface at Bakreswar (P.S. Dubrajpur) and Krishnanagar testifying to the existence of flake tool industry at these places.

Late Stone Age

As has already been stated, microliths have been found from places like John Cheap's Kuthi area, Syambati and Ballabhpur—near Santiniketan within the jurisdiction of P.S. Bolpur, Bakreswar and Giridanga within P.S. Dubrajpur, Jibdharpur (P.S. Suri), Nalhati and Krishnanagar along with the flake tools of the Middle Stone Age. Microliths of Late Stone Age have also been found from Chinpai (P.S. Dubrajpur), Hetampur (P.S. Dubrajpur), Siur (P.S. Suri), Sekedya-Makhdumpur (P.S. Mayureswar), Dangalpur and Maldih (P.S. Mahammad Bazar). The general matrix, from which the microlithic blades, points, scrapers and fluted cores were found, is said to be, the weathered sandy silt, often of reddish or pinkish colour, lateritic in association and content. Microlithic blades, lunates and triangles have been found from Dangalpur and Maldih.

In the absence of stratigraphic data it is very difficult to say by how many years decades or centuries the flake tool industry of Birbhum preceded the microlithic industry; if the former did

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[1] Source: Paresh Chandra Das Gupta, Director of Archaeology, West Bengal (November 1969).

[2] Indian Archaeology: A Review, 1961-62. New Delhi, p. 59.

[3] op. cit., loc. cit.

precede the latter, it is equally difficult to say whether there had been a continuity between these two technological stages. Similarly, it is difficult to say whether the later part of the Middle Stone Age and the earlier part of the Late Stone Age chronologically overlapped. Economically and socially, however, the change of technology from hand-axe to flake tools and flake tools to microliths did not signify any major or revolutionary change. Before the advent of the Neolithic ground and polished tools, Stone Age man remained a food gathered and hunter reaping no surplus over gathering what was barely necessary for subsistence.

Neolithic-Chalcolithic Age

One more noticeable fact of the pre-history of the district is that the Neolithic period is not distinguishable from the Copper or the Bronze Age as such. Only one site, namely Potanda in Indragachha mauza within the jurisdiction of Suri police station, has yielded four polished bar-celts with Neolithic characteristics, unassociated with either microliths of the earlier period or with the copper and/or bronze implements of the later period.[1] Wherever else polished and ground stone tools of Neolithic affinity have been found, they have been found with copper and/or bronze artefacts. According to Bridget and Raymond Allchin, in South Asia the Neolithic and the Chalcolithic largely overlap and it is always better to use these terms in combination rather than try to separate the two theoretically distinct stages of development.[2] So, in the context of the pre-history and proto-history of the district, it would not be wise to separate the Neolithic and the Chalcolithic.

But before we proceed to describe the Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites and finds in the district, one word about the continuity of the Late Stone Age microlithic industry right into the Chalcolithic period in the district is warranted. Almost all the important sites which have yielded ground and polished stone tools and copper and/or bronze implements, have also yielded microlithic blades, burins, lunates and like objects. At least at two sites, where proper excavations have been carried out, that is in Mahisdal in Bolpur police station area and Nanur in Nanur police station area, the microliths and polished celts and metal implements have been found from the same geological strata. This means that the microlithic industry did continue right up to the Neolithic-Chalcolithic period and some microliths were contemporaneous with the

[1] Paresh Chandra Das Gupta Excavations at Pandu Rajar Dhibi. Calcutta, 1964. p. 41.

[2] Bridget & Raymond Allchin — The Birth of Indian Civilization. London, 1968. p. 28.

polished celts and metal artefacts. But this should not be taken to mean that the economy remained more or less at the Late Stone Age stage. From the evidence of the remnants of human settlements and burnt grains, found out during the excavations at Chandidas-Nanur and Mahisdal, one cannot escape coming to the conclusion that hunting, food gathering and pastoralism had long ceased to be the predominant modes of economy—giving the people no surplus over and above bare subsistence. The human society had already evidenced the first revolution which was ushered in by the innovation of settled agriculture with plough. The introduction of settled agriculture with plough, for the first time in human history, gave man a surplus of production over what was barely necessary for subsistence, and some men in a group of men began to appropriate that surplus.

Microliths, in association with Neoliths and Chalcolithic artefacts, have been found from Kirnahar in P.S. Nanur (exploration), Beluti Saraswatitala in P.S. Bolpur (exploration), Giridanga in P.S. Dubrajpur (exploration), Chandidas-Nanur in police station area of Nanur (excavation) and from Mahisdal in P.S. Bolpur (excavation). Microlithic finds from Kirnahar include a retouched point and a fluted core and from Chandidas-Nanur a few points and burins.

Mahisdal

Archaeologically and historically, however, the most important are the Chalcolithic (Neolithic-Chalcolithic) sites of the district. Of these the most important is Mahisdal (23°43′ N. 87°41′ E.) in P.S. Bolpur, on the north bank of the river Kopai. Here successive excavations have been carried out from 1964 by the Excavation Branch of the Eastern Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India. An occupational deposit of about two metres overlying a natural mound rising a little over three metres above the flood-plain of the Kopai, revealed two cultural periods through which the civilization survived.

Period I was Chalcolithic and was constituted of two settlement phases as identified by two floor levels. The beaten earth floors with terracotta nodule soling were found covered with ash, burnt reed-impressed clay daubs and fire-baked husk-impressed pieces of mud plaster. The houses were probably simple huts of mud plastered reed. Tools of production of the period were indicated by the finds which included microlithic scrapers, lunates and short blades, polished Neolithic celts and blades, a typical Bronze Age flat copper celt, some copper arrow-heads and a few of what looks like a fish-hook. Besides these, the material cultural assemblage

of the period was represented by some terracotta gamesmen, a decorated bone comb, some bone pins and bone bangles, beads of semi-precious stones, a semi-precious stone steatite and a realistic terracotta phallus (it cannot be said whether this phallus had a ritual function). The pottery of the period was represented by black-and-red wares—plain or with paintings in white, and bright red ware—plain or with painting in black. Paintings are either incised linear fillets or pinholed decorations. So far as the shapes are concerned, lipped or channel-spouted bowls and carinated bowls with splayed out rims are commonly met with. An interesting find is represented by a large quantity of charred paddy, scattered all over the second floor level, from a fairly large pit-granary in the vicinity.[1] This proves three things: one, that there was settled agriculture in the period; two, that rice had already become a staple and three, that there was enough surplus produce to need the construction of the pit-granary. This period is dated by three C14 Radio-carbon samples to 1380 and 855 B.C.[2]

Period II in Mahisdal was largely a continuation of the earlier cultural tradition. The pottery, however, became coarse. The finds include sherds of buff and grey wares, one of the latter with bold smudgy strokes in black, introducing a novel feature. Among other finds are microliths and a large variety of beads of semi-precious stones and a broken toy elephant. But the most significant feature of the period is the arrival of iron. Iron objects such as arrow and spear heads, chisels, nails and large quantities of slag testifies to the metallurgical attainment of the period.[3] A single C14 Radio-carbon sample suggests that iron came in use before 690 B.C.[4]

Chandidas-Nanur

Another important Neolithic-Chalcolithic site is Chandidas-Nanur within the jurisdiction of P.S. Nanur, where the first excavation work was carried out by K. G. Goswami of the University of Calcutta in 1945-46. Subsequently the Eastern Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India carried out two more excavations

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1 Source: Eastern Circle, Archaeological Survey of India. Also: Bridget & Raymond Allchin — The Birth of Indian Civilization. London, 1968. pp. 198-9

2 B. & R. Allchin — op. cit. pp. 199 & 337.
TFR 391. Chalcolithic. Years 3235 ± 105(3330 ± 105) old.
TFR 392. Chalcolithic. Years 2950 ± 105(3035 ± 110) old.
TFR 390. Chalcolithic. Years 2725 ± 100(2805 ± 100) old.

3 Source: Eastern Circle, Archaeological Survey of India. Also B. & R Allchin — op. cit. p. 199 and N. R. Banerjee — the Iron Age in India. Delhi, 1965. pp. 217-9.

4 ibid. p. 199 & 337: Tata Institute of Fundamental Research sample—389. Early Iron Age. Years 2565 ± 105(2640 ± 105) old.

in 1961 and 1963. "Excavations revealed that the site had been in occupation from proto-historic through historical including medieval to modern times."[1] But one cannot be certain about whether there had been a continuity in the sequence of human settlements at this place through successive stages of economic, social and technological development. The proto-historic or the Neolithic-Chalcolithic finds include black painted and plain red ware, white painted and plain black-and-red pottery and grey ware. Designs are incised and/or stamped. Pottery objects include knife-edged bowls, channel spouted bowls and grey ware dishes—all in fragments. A retouched microlithic point was found from the level that had yielded sherds of black-and-red and red wares.[2]

Surath Rajar Dhibi

Still another important Neolithic-Chalcolithic site is the so-called Surath Rajar Dhibi in mauza Supur within the jurisdiction of P.S. Bolpur. The findings from the eroded base of the *dhibi* or the mound (about 12 feet high) include small fragments of red ware, black-and-red ware and chocolate-brown ware as also a small carnelian bead and a retouched microlith.[3] There was, however, no excavation at this place.

Other Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites

Besides the Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites already referred to, Neolithic-Chalcolithic artefacts, often with microliths in association, have also been found from a number of places in the district during explorations conducted either by the Eastern Circle of the Archaeological Surveys of India or by the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal.

From Kirnahar in P.S. Nanur sherds of black-and-red ware and fragment of a channel-spouted bowl have been found along with a retouched microlithic point and a fluted core.[4] The mound of Beluti at Saraswatitala within the jurisdiction of P.S. Bolpur, on the road between Bolpur and Kirnahar has yielded fragmentary examples of black-and-red and red ware besides a small mineralized bone and a microlithic waste flake.[5] Fragments of white painted black-and-red ware, bright polished red ware, channel spouted bowl and perforated pottery have been found along with microliths at

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1 Indian Archaeology: A Review 1963-64. New Delhi, 1965.
2 ibid. & Indian Archaeology: A Review 1961-62. New Delhi, 1963, p. 59.
3 Paresh Chandra Das Gupta — The Excavations at Pandu Rajar Dhibi. Calcutta, 1964. p. 42. cf. Indian Archaeology: A Review 1962-63. New Delhi, 1964. p. 43.
4 Indian Archaeology: A Review 1963-64. New Delhi, 1965 and Paresh Chandra Das Gupta (November 1969).
5 Paresh Chandra Das Gupta — op. cit p. 41 & Indian Archaeology: Review 1963-64.

Mandira, on the Ajoy, near Joydev-Kenduli, within the jurisdiction of Ilambazar police station.[1] A few rolled ochre coloured sherds, broken pieces of black-and-red and black polished ware have been found from Joshpur in P.S. Dubrajpur. This place has also yielded some microliths.[2] Giridanga in P.S. Dubrajpur, from where Middle Stone Age flake-tools and Late Stone Age microliths have been found, has also yielded some fragments of channel spouted bowls.[3] Remnants of black-and-red ware and Northern Black Polished ware, along with microliths have been found from Kotasur.[4] Remnants of black-and-red ware have been found also from Araipur, Bansra, Batikar, Baharia, Gopalnagar, Keora, Khustikari, Mangaldih and Nachanshala.[5] Besides these fragments of black-and-red ware and channel spouted bowls have been discovered from Bergram, Gorapara, Hatikra, Hansra, Kayera and Kurmitha.[6]

Salkhana within Haraipur mauza in P.S. Suri had been an interesting centre of Chalcolithic civilization of the region. The find of several skeletal remains of children has proved that this was a Chalcolithic burial site. All the remains go to prove that extended burial was the custom.[7]

From the distribution of the Neolithic-Chalcolithic remains in the district it can be presumed that the Neolithic-Chalcolithic culture was quite widespread in the district. From the typology of artefacts found from the district, it can also be presumed that the Neolithic-Chalcolithic culture of the district had its similarities with the Chalcolithic civilization of Pandu Rajar Dhibi on the Ajoy in the neighbouring Burdwan district, the Period II of which was more or less contemporaneous to the Chalcolithic culture of the Period I at Mahisdal. A Single Radio-Carbon C14 gives the date of 1012 ± 120 B.C. to the Period II of Pandu Rajar Dhibi.[8] Since seals with scripts have been found at Pandu Rajar Dhibi with which the Chalcolithic culture of Mahisdal is contemporaneous and similar in character, the Neolithic-Chalcolithic of Mahisdal, if not of Birbhum as a whole, can be said to be properly proto-historic.

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1 Indian Archaeology: A Review 1962-63. New Delhi, 1964. p. 43 & Paresh Chandra Das Gupta — op. cit pp 42-3.
2 ibid. 1963-64. & ibid. p. 43.
3 Source: Paresh Chandra Das Gupta, Director of Archaeology, West Bengal (November 1969).
4 Indian Archaeology: A Review 1962-67. New Delhi, 1964. p. 71.
5 Indian Archaeology: A Review 1967-68. p. 68 & Indian Archaeology: A Review 1963-64. p. 92.
6 ibid. & ibid.
7 Source: Eastern Circle, Archaeological Survey of India: & Paresh Chandra Das Gupta, Director of Archaeology, West Bengal.
8 B. & R. Allchin — op. cit. p 198.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Earliest literary reference

The earliest literary reference to the region of which the present Birbhum district forms a part, is found in the early Jain text—*Āchārāṅga-sūtta.*[1] The *Sūtra tradition*, according to some scholars, dates from about the 5th century B.C., i.e. approximately from the time of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra himself; it is assumed that parts of it were written around the 3rd century B.C.[2] According to this text, the twentyfourth Tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra travelled extensively in the Subba (=Suhma)-bhūmi and Vajja (=Vajra)-bhūmi in the country of the Lāḍhas (=Rāḍha). The country was pathless and rugged and the terrain was covered with forests; villages were few and far between and the people were inhospitable. They would not give alms to the monks and would instead incite fierce dogs after them.

During the period under review, Lāḍha or Rāḍha was more or less a socio-cultural geographic concept, the land of the Lāḍhas or Rāḍhas, with not a very well defined set of boundaries, unlike what it was between A.D. 9th and 13th centuries, when the terms Uttara-Rāḍha-*Maṇḍala* **and** Dakshiṇa-Rāḍha-*Maṇḍala* assumed complete politico-geographic connotations with more or less definite boundaries. According to some later commentators of the *Āchārāṅga-sūtta*, the capital city of Vajja (= Vajra)-bhūmi was a town called Panitābhūmi. From the internal evidence of *Āchārāṅga-sūtta* itself, it can be assumed that at least some parts of the modern district of Birbhum were included in Vajja (= Vajra)-bhūmi. From later descriptions, it appears that the land of the Suhmas, which came to be known as Dakshiṇa (South) Rāḍha, from about the 9th century A.D., never extended up to the north of the Ajay river or to the west of the alluvial plains of the Gangetic West Bengal. On the other hand, from the descriptions of the land given in the text, it appears that the name Vajra-bhūmi refers to that part of Rāḍha where it was difficult to travel through dense forest and unwelcome lands filled with sand and gravels (lateritic?). This description of the physiognomy of the land fits well with the lateritic portions of the Birbhum, Burdwan, Bankura and Midnapur districts. Yet, it is very difficult to assume that the tract of land which yielded remnants of chalcolithic civilization which was definitely moving towards the early iron age technology the 8th century B.C. could

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1 Hirakumari (tr. and ed.)—*Āchārāṅga-sūtta*, Swetāmbar Jain Mahāmandal, Calcutta (undated).

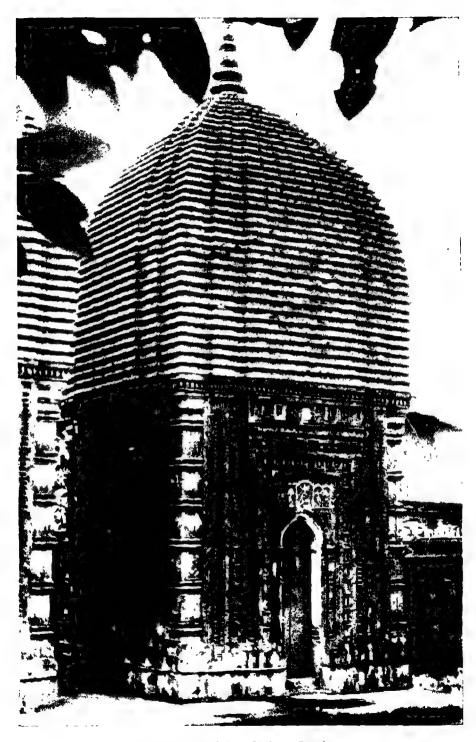
2 Max Muller (ed.)—Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXII. by Hermann Jacobi. London.

in course of two or three centuries become as de-civilized and re-tribalized as gleaned from the *Āchārāṅga-sūtta.* Even if it is conceded that the chalcolithic civilization which developed in the cities and towns now represented by Pandu Rajar Dhibi and Mahisdal, were confined to the areas in and around those particular cities and a tribal state of affairs continued unabated in the distant villages and hamlets, the question still remains as to why Mahāvīra, the great missionary, omitted the cities and towns from his itinerary of travels.

It is the considered opinion of scholars like Ramakrishnagopal Bhandarkar, R. D. Banerji and Prabodh Chandra Bagchi that Prāchyadesa (literally, the eastern country, which comprised practically the whole of West Bengal, including the present district of Birbhum) was Aryanized by Jainism and Jain monks and preachers, although there is no archaeological evidence to prove that. There is, however, one significant point to note in this connexion. There is a *pargana* in Birbhum district spread out in the thanas of Suri, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar and Bolpur called Jain-Ujhial. *Parganas* in Bengal, as we know, were created according to the terms of Todar Mal or Shah Sujah or Murshid Quli Khan's revenue settlements; but the names by which these *parganas* came to be known were often of older origin. Jain-Ujhial sounds like an older name. If it be so, then it would be interesting to know whether the tract of the country comprising the *pargana* had any connexion with Jainism at a certain period of time. Birbhum, which, according to R. D. Banerji, falls within 'the Jain zone of influence' has yielded a number of Jain icons of Pāla idiom.[1] But this does not surely prove the contention that the Birbhum area was Aryanized by the Jains because these sculptures are from the 9th to 12th centuries.

Buddhist texts & the *Mahābhārata*

The easternmost country in the list of the Sixteen Mahājanapadas, mentioned in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, is Aṅga. This country lay to the east of Magadha from which it was separated by the river Champā, probably the modern Chandan. The northern and eastern boundaries of Aṅga were probably the Ganges and the Bhagirathi respectively. The *Kathā-Saritsāgara*[2] states that Viṭaṅkapura, a city of Aṅga was on the sea. This description of Aṅga would include entire Suhma or the Southern Rāḍha within Aṅga and would also include the portions of

1 Promode Lal Paul—'Jainism in Bengal', in Indian Culture, Vol. 3, Calcutta, 1936-37.
2 25: 35; 26.115; 28-3-16.

1. *Rekha deul* (A.D. 1831) at Surul.

2. Archway panel depicting *Mahishāsuramardinī* on the facade of the *Rekha deul* at Surul.

Northern Rāḍha or Vajra-bhūmi that lay to the South of the Ganges and West of the Bhagirathi including modern Birbhum district. The *Mahābhārata* states that Aṅga included even Vaṅga.[1] Bimbisara, the first known imperial monarch of Magadha, conquered Aṅga and probably retained some form of sway over Rāḍha included in Aṅga.

The Age of the Nandas

When the Nandas came to power in Magadha they possibly held this region in their dominion. Curtius Rufus and Diodorus Siculus mention that the Nanda king Agrammes was the lord of Prasii and Gangaridae. Prasii obviously is Prāchya and stood for the Magadhan kingdom which had earlier absorbed Aṅga. Gangaridae has been held by scholars to refer to deltaic south-east Bengal. The Hatigumpha inscription of the king Khāravela states that the Nandas were also the rulers of Kaliṅga. A monarch holding sway over deltaic south-east Bengal and Kaliṅga from his imperial seat at Pāṭaliputra must certainly have enjoyed hegemony over the greater portion of the Rāḍha country. But it is difficult to say anything about the kind and extent of authority the Nanda emperor held over the jungle infested and sparsely populated infertile lands like Vajra-bhūmi included in his empire.

Maurya period

The Nandas were ousted by Chandragupta Maurya. From the account of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to Chandragupta Maurya's Court, we find that Kaliṅga was an independent kingdom. Speaking about the river Ganges, Megasthenes mentioned of a river called Amystis, which used to flow past the city of Katadupa before joining the Ganges.[2] According to W. Wilson and W. Oldham, Amystis is to be identified with the Ajoy and Katadupa with the town Katwa in the neighbouring Burdwan district.[3] Megasthenes did not, however, specifically state whether the Amystis flowed through the kingdom of Gangaridae or whether Katadupa was a city of Gangaridae kingdom or not. Much credence, however, should not be given to these phonetic speculations.

The grandson of Chandragupta, Asoka the Great, subdued Kaliṅga and made no further conquest in his life. With the conquest of Kaliṅga, Asoka probably annexed the contiguous tract in the Midnapur district of West Bengal up to the

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1 Sabhaparva. pp. 44-9.
2 R. C. Majumdar — The Classical Accounts of India. Calcutta, 1960. p. 217.
3 W. Oldham — Some Historical and Ethnical Aspects of Burdwan District. Calcutta, 1891. p. 2.

Suvarṇarekhā river, to his empire. His pillar edicts from Jaugaḍa and Ḍhauli (in modern Orissa) to Lauriya Araraja and Lauriya Nandangarh in North Bihar and Nepal Terai may be taken to mark the eastern limits of his empire. If a straight line from Lauriya Nandangarh to Ḍhauli is drawn across the map, that would pass through Gaya district and exclude northern and southern Rāḍha. There is also no direct epigraphic or numismatic evidence to prove that West Bengal lying between the Ganges and the Suvarṇarekha was ever included in the Mauryan empire.

Gupta period

The greater parts of southern and northern Bengal were annexed to the Gupta empire either during the reign of Chandragupta I or during the reigns of his son Samudragupta or his grandson Chandragupta II. The Imperial Guptas annexed the province after subjugating a number of small independent principalities which dotted the country. Among the kings of Āryāvarta, who, according to the Allahabad Praśasti, were uprooted by Samudragupta, we find the mention of one Chandravarman who may be reasonably identified with the king of that name mentioned in the Susunia rock inscription as the ruler of Pushkarana. This Pushkarana has been identified with Pakhanna in Bankura district and the Susunia hill is also in the same district.[1] But in all probability, this Chandravarman's kingdom lay to the south of the river Damodar and as such could not possibly have included any portion of the present Birbhum district.[2] It, therefore, seems improbable that the tract within the limits of the present Birbhum district came automatically within the Gupta empire with the conquest of the kingdom of Chandravarman.[3] The question of Birbhum's inclusion in the Gupta empire becomes all the more difficult to answer when we take into consideration the facts that neither has any Gupta record been found from Rāḍha region nor does any Gupta record from any other area mention anything

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1 Amiya Kumar Banerji (ed.)—West Bengal District Gazetteers: Bankura, Calcutta, 1968. pp 60-3.

2 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—History of Bengal, Vol. I. Dacca, 1942.

3 According to a legend, during the 4th century, a dynasty called the dynasty of the Nala kings ruled over considerable portions of the present Birbhum district. Extensive ruins in Nalhati are pointed out in support of the theory that the ruins represent the archaeological remains of the palaces and temples of Nala kings. The descendants of the Nalas, it is believed, continued to rule over different parts of the district till about the 14th century, as small feudatory chiefs, vassals or landholding officials under different sovereigns. At different times the collateral branches of the house had their seats of residence at Nalhati, Sandhigarabazar and Chandidasa-Nanur. *Vide* Gaurihar Mitra—*Birbhūmer Itihās*, Vol. I. Suri, 1343 B.S. pp. 68-9.

about northern Rāḍha's inclusion in that empire.[1] Yet, it is a well-known fact that Gauḍa was very much within the Gupta empire. Since, in the 6th century a major portion of the present Birbhum district was included in Gauḍaka, we can assume that even during the time of the Imperial Guptas the Birbhum portion of Gauḍa was included in the Gupta empire and that Gauḍa remained within the empire of later Guptas till the rise of Śaśāṅka.[2]

With the fall of the Imperial Guptas, around the beginning of the 6th century A.D., governors of the Imperial provinces, in most cases linked with the Gupta dynasty by kinship ties, were assuming full sovereignty. One such governor was Vainyagupta, himself probably a scion of the Gupta family who was ruling over Eastern, Southern and South-western Bengal (South Rāḍha).[3] He could not possibly retain his kingdom for long, for we find the same areas governed by three kings, Gopachandra, Dharmāditya and Samāchardeva at different points of time after Vainyagupta. From a copper-plate inscription of a land grant found from the village of Mallasarul within Galsi police station area in Burdwan district, we know that one Mahārājā Vijayasena was Mahārājādhirāja Gopachandra's vassal chief in Bardhamāna-*bhukti*. The same Vijayasena was also perhaps Vainyagupta's vassal chief in the same Bardhamāna-*bhukti*.[4] It is quite probable that the administrative division called Bardhamāna-*bhukti* was there even during the time of the Imperial Guptas.

Whether the administrative division called Bardhamāna-*bhukti*, during the days of the Gupta hegemony over Bengal, included the whole or parts of the present district of Birbhum remains an unsolved question. From a Gazetteer-like source of the 6th century, viz. Varāhamihira's *Bṛihat-saṁhitā*, we can infer that at least after the downfall of the Imperial Guptas a major portion, if not the whole, of the present district of Birbhum lay outside the boundaries of Bardhamāna-*bhukti*. It is assumed that Gopachandra reigned during the first half of the 6th century; Varāhamihira's *Bṛihat-saṁhitā* is also ascribed to the same century. According to *Bṛihat-saṁhitā*, to the north of Bardhamānaka or Bardhamāna-*bhukti* lay Gauḍaka, which was a distinct entity with no connexions with Puṇḍra (North Bengal), Tāmraliptaka (part

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[1] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 50 ff.
[2] ibid. p. 57.
[3] ibid. pp. 51-3.
[4] loc. cit.

of the present Midnapur district), Vaṅga (East-Central Bengal), Samataṭa (Far Eastern Bengal) and Bardhamānaka (South Rāḍha).[1] Scholars like R. C. Majumdar think that Gauḍaka of the 6th century included the tracts which in the 12th century came to comprise Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti*. The Northern Rāḍha, from the Ajoy northwards, formed a *Maṇḍala* called the Uttara-Rāḍha-*Maṇḍala* (as distinguished from Dakshina or Southern Rāḍha),[2] within Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti*. It is presumed that in the 6th century Birbhum and Murshidabad, in the North Rāḍha, formed integral parts of Gauḍaka and lay outside Bardhamāna-*bhukti*'s or Mahārājādhirāja Gopachandra's jurisdiction.[3] But the *Bṛhat-saṁhitā* does neither specify the name of the ruler of Gauḍaka nor say anything about Gauḍaka's nature of relationship with Puṇḍra, Bardhamāna, Tāmraliptaka, Vaṅga and Samataṭa. It may be possible that the later Guptas who had been ruling over Puṇḍra in the North and Vaṅga in the East Central Bengal till A.D. 544[4] enjoyed some degree of control over Gauḍaka. "This presumption is strengthened by the consideration that we know of no independent ruler of Gauḍa before the rise of Śaśāṅka, who flourished early in the 7th century A.D., probably began his life as a Mahāsāmanta, presumably under Mahāsenagupta"—a later Gupta himself.[5]

The Gupta suzerainty over Gauḍa in the 6th century was more nominal than real. That Gauḍa came to be regarded as an important political unit by the middle of the 6th century A.D., is proved by the Haraha inscription of the Maukhari king Īśāna-varman, dated A.D. 554. It states, *inter alia,* that in the course of his victorious campaigns Īśānavarman came in conflict with the Gauḍas, ravaged their territories, and forced them to retreat towards the sea. The reference to the sea seems to indicate that the conflict with the Gauḍas took place in the southern part of West Bengal. We have seen before that this southern part of West Bengal probably formed an administrative division of the kingdom of Vaṅga. That kingdom was founded by Gopachandra at the first half of the 6th century. It is thus difficult to decide whether Īśānavarman's opponent was a Gauḍa or a Vaṅga king.

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[1] ibid. pp. 13 & 27.
[2] ibid. p. 27.
[3] loc. cit.
[4] According to Damodarpur Inscription No. 5, a Gupta ruler was ruling in Puṇḍravardhana in A.D. 544; *vide*, Niharranjan Ray—*Bāṅgālīr Itihās, Ādiparva* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1356 B.S. p. 455.
[5] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 56.

If the former was the case, then it must be presumed that prior to Iśānavarman's invasion almost the whole of West Bengal came under the sway of Gauḍa and the Vaṅga king's jurisdiction came to be confined to the southern and eastern Bengal, now in Bangladesh. Then ensued a long drawn struggle between the Maukharis and the later Guptas. While the Maukharis became firmly entrenched in Magadha, in Gauḍa the later Guptas more or less held their sway with the aid of their vassal chiefs and allies. Śaśāṅka, probably a Mahāsāmanta of Mahāsenagupta, was one such vassal chief.

Śaśāṅka

The long drawn war with Maukharis, Kalachuris and the ruler of Kāmarūpa shattered the power of the later Guptas. Śaśāṅka utilised the opportunity and under his leadership Gauḍa rose as a power to challenge the supremacy of the Maukharis, Kalachuris, Kāmarūpa and of the later Guptas themselves.

Śaśāṅka occupies a prominent place in the history of Bengal. He is the first known king of Bengal who extended his territories far beyond the geographical boundaries of the present State of West Bengal. According to D. C. Ganguli, he was a vassal chief of the Maukharis of Magadha.[1] According to R. D. Banerji, he was either a son or a nephew of Mahāsenagupta, thereby becoming a later Gupta himself.[2] But most scholars think that he was a vassal chief under Mahāsenagupta though not related to the latter by kinship ties.[3] There is hardly any doubt that both northern and western Bengal were included in his dominions and by aligning himself with the ruler of Mālava against the Maukharis, the later Guptas and the ruler of Thāneswar, he extended his kingdom up to Vārāṇasī to the west. In the south he extended his suzerainty up to the Chilka lake. But it seems probable that he had to give up some of his acquired territories during his life-time and remain contented with Gauḍa and parts of Magadha till his death in A.D. 637-8.[4]

Śaśāṅka had his capital at Karṇasuvarṇa, now finally identified with Kansonapur near Chiruti railway station on the Barharwa Loop line of the Eastern Railway, in Jangipur subdivision of the neighbouring Murshidabad district. The tracts within the boundaries of the modern district of Birbhum lay in the heart of the kingdom of Gauḍa. But then, probably only a small

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1 D. C. Ganguli — Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XII, p. 457.
2 Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyaya — *Bāṅgalār Itihās* (in Bengali). Calcutta. 3rd edition. p. 105.
3 R. C. Majumdar (ed.) — op. cit. pp. 59-60.
4 ibid. pp. 64-5.

portion of the present district was inhabited by human settlers. In the 11th century, Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa, a minister of a Varmana king, described the tract as arid, jungly and sparsely populated.[1] So, it may be presumed that during Śaśāṅka's time also, only the eastern part of Birbhum adjoining the Murshidabad district and the southern part of the district adjoining the Burdwan district were properly inhabited and the rest was forest-covered with villages situated far from each other.

It seems probable that the later Guptas, as well as Śaśāṅka, who inherited the later Gupta system of administration, remained content with extending their suzerainty over the local chiefs and vassals. Thus local chiefs and vassals, besides being in the real command of power over the territory in their jurisdiction, also acted as agents of the imperial administration in the administrative divisions (*bhukti*), districts (*maṇḍalas*), subdivisions (*vishayas*) or in the circles (*bīthis*) in their charge. The amount of power they enjoyed depended on the strength or weakness of the imperial authority at a given period of time. This system of administration came to stay in Bengal and during the Pāla and Sena periods became highly formalized.[2]

During Śaśāṅka's time the tract within the boundaries of the modern Birbhum district was probably governed by the king himself from his capital at Karṇasuvarṇa with the help of some subordinate officers. It is not precisely known in which *bhukti* or *maṇḍala* the present district was included. Probably a part of the district along with some parts of the Murshidabad district comprised a *vishaya* called Audambarika-*vishaya*, of which details will be given a little later.

With Śaśāṅka's death his empire broke up. Hieun-tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited Bengal after the death of Śaśāṅka, around the year A.D. 638, mentions besides Kajaṅgala (territory around Rajmahal immediately to the north of Birbhum, in Santal Parganas district of Bihar), four kingdoms in Bengal proper, namely Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal), Karṇasuvarṇa (Central-West Bengal), Samataṭa (Far East and South East Bengal) and Tāmralipti (South West, mainly comprising the Midnapur district). The first two undoubtedly denote the two component parts of Śaśāṅka's kingdom, viz. North Bengal and northern and central parts of West Bengal, including the major parts of the modern districts of

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[1] Niharranjan Ray — *Bāṅgālir Itihās, Ādiparva* (in Bengali). Calcutta, 1356 B.S. p. 85.
[2] ibid. pp. 461-2.

Murshidabad, Nadia, Birbhum and Burdwan. This statement of Hieun-tsang is further corroborated by the *Ārya-manjuśrī-mūlakalpa* and some archaeological evidence, as we shall presently see.

Jayanāga

The political disintegration of the Gauḍa empire after the death of Śaśāṅka seems to have been referred to in *Ārya-manjuśrī-mūlakalpa* which states, "after the death of Soma (= Moon = Śaśāṅka) the Gauḍa-tantra (the Gauḍa political system) was reduced to mutual distrust, raised weapons and mutual jealousy, one king for a week, another for a month..." etc. The passage that follows immediately after the aforementioned passage in the *Ārya-manjuśrī-mūlakalpa* refers to a king named Jayanāga. "*Nāgarājā-Samahveyo Gauḍa rājā bhavishyati/ante tasya nṛipe tishṭham Jayādyāvarṇatadviśau.*"[1] This Jayanāga is identified with the king of the same name whose coins have been found in different parts of West Bengal, including the Murshidabad and Birbhum districts and who issued a land-grant from the victorious camp of Karṇasuvarṇa, once the capital of Śaśāṅka.

Now, who was this Jayanāga? We know that Śaśāṅka's adversary Harshavardhana of Thāneswara made a grand alliance with Bhāskaravarmana of Kāmarūpa against Śaśāṅka and became engaged in a prolonged struggle; but before this struggle ended Śaśāṅka died. According to the evidence of Nidhanpur copper-plate just after Śaśāṅka's death, Bhāskaravarmana occupied Karṇasuvarṇa.[2] After the anarchy and confusion, caused by the invasion, had subsided and a son of Śaśāṅka had vainly tried to re-establish the hegemony of his family, the kingdom passed into the hands of Jayanāga. The date of Jayanāga cannot be ascertained with precision, but judging from his coins and inscription he may be placed between A.D. 550 and 650. In his coins and inscription, he is referred to as Mahārājādhirāja and as such it cannot be presumed that he was under the suzerainty of any other king. Although the extent of his kingdom is not precisely known, judging from the Vappaghoshavāṭa copper-plate inscription it can definitely be said that his kingdom, *inter alia*, included the south-east portion of Santal Parganas, the whole of north Birbhum and a greater part of the Murshidabad districts.[3] But following the evidence of Hieun-tsang it can be presumed that Puṇḍravardhana, Kajaṅgala, Tāmralipti and Samataṭa were out-

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1 *Ārya-manjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, verse 636. The Sanskrit is corrupt.
2 Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XII, p. 73.
3 R. C. Majumdar (ed.) — op. cit. p. 80.

side the bounds of the kingdom of Gauḍa.

Socio-economic condition

The only details about the social and administrative conditions during the reign of Jayanāga is provided by the Vappaghoshavāṭa grant of Jayanāga. The object of the copper-plate inscription was to specify the bounds of a certain village Vappaghoshavāṭa granted to Bhaṭṭa-Brahmavīrasvāmī, a Brahmin of Kāśyapa *gôtra* as a perpetual endowment by Nārāyaṇabhadra, a Mahāsāmanta under Mahārājādhirāja Jayanāga, in charge of Audambarika-*vishaya*. This grant was drawn up by the *pratihāra* Sūryasena at the orders of Mahāsāmanta Nārāyaṇabhadra. Taking into consideration the boundaries given in the inscription, L. D. Barnett places the village in the Murshidabad district.[1] What is more important for our purpose is the identification of Audambarika-*vishaya*, L. D. Barnett, R. C. Majumdar and Niharranjan Ray are of the opinion that Audambarika-*vishaya* is to be identified with the *sarkār* Udambar of *Āin-i-Ākbari* of Ābul Fazl. This 16th century *sarkār* comprised parts of Santal Parganas, north-west part of Murshidabad and northern parts of Birbhum districts.[2]

Audambarika-*vishaya*

It should be noted with interest that unlike Bengal under the Guptas, the kingdom of Karṇasuvarṇa, at least after Śaśāṅka's death, was not divided into *bhuktis* and *maṇḍalas*. The only administrative units into which the kingdom was divided were *vishayas*. Mahāsāmantas, either vassal chiefs or imperial officers, were in charge of administration of these *vishayas*. The feudatory chiefs were usually helped in the discharge of their administrative duties by a class of officials called *pratihāras*. Scholars of social history like Niharranjan Ray have noticed a tendency among the Hindu empire-builders of ancient India to settle Brahmins in rent-free lands.[3] The above reference to the donation of the village Vappaghoshavāṭa to the Brahmin Bhaṭṭa Brahmavīra conforms to that usage.

Rise of the Pālas: Gopāla

The *mātsyanyāya*[4] (literally, the state of affairs where the big fish eats up the small and is in turn devoured by the bigger one and so on; figuratively, the rule of force) that ensued in Bengal after Śaśāṅka's death came to an end after a century in

[1] L. D. Barnett — 'Vappaghoshavāṭa Grant of Jayanāga', in Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XVIII, p. 661.

[2] H. S. Jarett (tr.) & J. N. Sarkar (ed.)—*Āin-i-Ākbari* of Ābul Fazl, Vol. II. Calcutta, 1949. p. 127.

[3] ibid. pp. 216-7.

[4] *Yadi na praṇayed rājā daṇḍam daṇḍyesvatandritah/Sule matsyān ivāpakshyan durvalān valavattarāḥ//*Manu, Chapter vii, Verse 20.

the middle of the 8th century with the election of Gopāla to kingship by the *prakṛiti*, that is, by the general populace.[1] But it is most likely that the petty local chiefs and chieftains elected Gopāla to be the king. Although in the Monghyr copper-plate inscription of his grandson Devapāla, Gopāla is credited with the conquest of the earth to the south up to the sea, the claim is not taken very seriously by historians like R. C. Majumdar and Niharranjan Ray. Deltaic South-east Bengal was possibly the ancestral home land of Gopāla and he possibly rose to kingship somewhere in the same Vaṅga country. From the Gwalior inscription of Nāgabhāṭa an inference can be drawn that Vaṅga or the deltaic south-eastern Bengal was the ancestral home of Dharmapāla, Gopāla's son. In his lifetime Gopāla possibly annexed parts of Varendrī or North Bengal to his kingdom. But it seems unlikely that Gopāla, during his lifetime, had annexed the central area of Gauḍa kingdom to his dominion. As we have already seen, the present Birbhum district formed the central area of Gauḍa kingdom along with the neighbouring Murshidabad district. But the question remains whether in the course of the anarchy that prevailed in Bengal for a century before the accession of Gopāla, the kingdom of Gauḍa of Śaśāṅka or even that of Jayanāga remained intact.

Dharmapāla & Rāḍha

Gopāla's son Dharmapāla ascended the throne in *circa* A.D. 770. Dharmapāla inherited a consolidated and powerful kingdom comprising Varendrī (North Bengal) and Vaṅga (East Bengal). After annexing the rest of the present West Bengal up to at least as far south as the Damodar river, Dharmapāla began to expand his dominion towards the west, far beyond the boundaries of Bengal. It thus seems probable that during the reign of Dharmapāla the areas within the old kingdom of Gauḍa including the present district of Birbhum got incorporated into the Pāla empire. The Pāla empire at that time possibly did not include South or Dakshiṇa Rāḍha.[2] But Dharmapāla's son Devapāla in the course of a victorious expedition to Utkala must have annexed southern Rāḍha to Pāla kingdom.[3] During the long reign of about 40 years of Devapāla the Pāla empire reached the height of its glory, but this glory and brilliance of the Pāla empire did not long survive the death of Devapāla. The five

Devapāla & Rāḍha

[1] Khalimpur Copper-Plate Verse 4, Epigraphia Indica, Vol. IV, pp. 243-54.
[2] Amiya Kumar Banerji (ed).—West Bengal District Gazetteers: Bankura. Calcutta, 1968. p. 65.
[3] op. cit., loc. cit. & R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. pp. 117-8.

successive Pāla kings after Devapāla had to struggle hard, first against the Gurjara-Pratihāras, Rāshṭrakuṭas and Gaṅga kings of Orissa, then against Chandellas and Kalachuris to be in saddle in Varendrī, Uttara-Rāḍha, Vaṅga and Magadha.

"These foreign raids may be regarded both as causes and effects of the military weakness and political disruption of the Pāla kingdom. The reference in Kalachuri and Chandella inscriptions to the various component parts of the kingdom such as Aṅga, Rāḍha, Gauḍa and Vaṅgāla as separate units may not be without significance."[1] While most of the countries mentioned above might have formed semi-independent principalities, Rāḍha, denoting the portion of West Bengal to the south of the Damodar and west of the Bhagirathi (properly southern or Dakshiṇa-Rāḍha) possibly was outside the orbit of any political influence of the Pāla kingdom. Northern Rāḍha, however, might have been within the Pāla sphere of influence.[2] Before the end of the reign of Vigrahapāla II (c. A.D. 980-8) the southern Rāḍha was probably under the domination of the Kamboja dynasty of Daṇḍa-*bhukti*.[3] During the second half of the 10th century the Pālas were in command only in Aṅga and Magadha—both areas being outside the limits of Bengal proper.[4] As a corollary of the last proposition we have to exclude the present district of Birbhum from the Pāla kingdom during the second half of the 10th century. Where then was Birbhum during that period? It is known that the Kambojas were in occupation of both northern Bengal and south-western Bengal, i.e. Varendrī and Daṇḍa-*bhukti*-

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1 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 199.

2 Amiya Kumar Banerji (ed).—West Bengal District Gazetteers: Howrah. Calcutta, 1972.

3 There is a sharp difference of opinion about the original homeland of the Kambojas. According to some scholars the Kambojas of Bengal belonged to the tribe of the same name met with in the NWFP of West Pakistan. The great distance of the homeland of these Kambojas from Bengal has induced scholars to look for Kambojas nearer the home. R. P. Chanda thought that the Kambojas came from Tibet. The Tibetan Chronicle, Pag-Sam-Jon-Zan, on the other hand calls a tract in the Mizo hills as the country of the Kambojas. The Dinajpur inscription (No. 48) refers to the rule of a Gauḍa king of Kamboja lineage and on palaeographic considerations it has to be referred to the tenth century. It was assumed that the Pālas lost a portion of Varendrī to the Kambojas. But after the discovery of the Irda plate of Rājyapāla, the jewel of the Kamboja family which was issued from Priyāṅgu the capital of the said king in Daṇḍa-*bhukti*, it became apparent that the Kambojas held sway not only over a portion of Varendra but also over a portion of southern Rāḍha. From the similarity of the names of the kings some scholars think that the Kambojas and the Pālas were not different, but facts militates against such assumption.

4 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 135.

maṇḍala. Birbhum proper was neither in Varendrī nor was it a part of Daṇḍa-*bhukti-maṇḍala*. The areas within the present district of Birbhum were in Gauḍa or Uttara-Rāḍha. Gauḍa or northern Rāḍha was probably ruled by some semi-independent chiefs acknowledging nominal suzerainty of either the Pālas or the Kambojas.

Where was modern Birbhum

When Mahīpāla I succeeded his father Vigrahapāla II around A.D. 988, the prospects of his family were undoubtedly gloomy. By heroic efforts he succeeded in restoring the fortunes of his family to a considerable extent. On the evidence of Bāṅgarh grant, Bāghāurā image inscription and Tirumalai inscription of Rājendra Chola, it can be inferred that within 3 years of his accession, Mahīpāla I re-established the hegemony of Pāla kingdom over Varendrī, Uttara (North) Rāḍha and Samataṭa. Some light is thrown on the political situation of Bengal of the time by the account of Rājendra Chola's invasion of Bengal.

Mahīpāla

Chola invasion

The northern expedition of the great Chola emperor was conducted in the course of two years—A.D. 1021-3.[1] The Tirumalai inscription of Rājendra Chola states that after conquering Oḍḍa-*vishaya* (Orissa) and Kosalai-nāḍu, the Cholas seized—"Tandabutti, . . . after having destroyed Dharmapala (in) a hot battle; Takkanaladam whose fame reached (all) directions (and which he occupied) after having forcibly attacked Ranasura; Vangala-desa, where rain water never stopped, . . . after having been pleased to frighten the strong Mahipala on the field of hot battle with the (noise of the) conches (got) from deep sea; Uttiraladam (on the shore of) the expansive ocean (producing); and the Ganga whose waters bearing fragrant flowers dashed against the bathing places."[2]

There can be no doubt that Taṇḍabutti, Takkaṇlāḍam, Vaṅgāladeśa, and Uttiralāḍam in the above passage refer respectively to Daṇḍa-*bhukti* (part of the present Midnapur district around Danton), Dakshiṇa (South)—Rāḍha, Vaṅgāla (East Bengal) and Uttara (North)—Rāḍha. It has been reasonably inferred from the Tirumalai inscription, quoted above, that the Cholas attacked and overthrew Dharmapāla of Daṇḍa-*bhukti*, Raṇaśūra of

[1] K. A. Nilkanta Sastri—The Cholas, p. 247 ff.

[2] The translation of Prof. K. A. Nilkanta Sastri differs to some extent from the translation given by Hultzsch (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. IX, p. 233) in respect of Uttiraladam. Hultzsch's translation reads: "Uttiraladam, as rich in pearls as the ocean" or alternatively, "Uttiraladam, close to the pearl producing ocean." Both these translations seem more probable than Prof. Sastri's on geographical considerations.

Dakshiṇa-Rāḍha and Govindachandra of Vaṅgāla, in that order, before they fought with Mahīpāla and conquered Uttara-Rāḍha. It is not definitely stated that Mahīpāla was the ruler of Uttara-Rāḍha, though that seems to be the implication as no separate ruler of this kingdom is mentioned.[1] The account seems to prove that Daṇḍa-*bhukti*, Dakshiṇa-Rāḍha and Vaṅgāla were independent of Pāla supremacy, or were semi-independent kingdoms at the time of the Chola invasion. Daṇḍa-*bhukti* could not have been ruled by a feudatory of Mahīpāla, since we know that a few decades back it came to be included within the domains of Kamboja king Nayapāla.[2] Dharmapāla of Daṇḍa-*bhukti* might have been a scion of the Kamboja family. Raṇaśūra of Dakshiṇa-Rāḍha must have been a ruler belonging to the Śūra family Apara-Mandāra identified with Mandaran of Arambagh subdivision in the Hooghly district.[3] The areas comprising the present district having been in the Uttara-Rāḍha zone, must have been under the direct hegemony of the Pāla king Mahīpāla. At least that is the implication of the Tirumalai inscription of Rājendra Chola. The Chola campaign, as Prof. Nilkanta Sastri has observed, "could hardly have been more than a hurried raid across vast stretch of country."[4] So it can be presumed that after the Cholas had left, Mahīpāla along with the other kings of Bengal had regained their hegemony over the territories they lost to Rājendra Chola.

Conflict with Kalachuris

The last years of Mahīpāla's reign were not peaceful. The Kalachuri king Gaṅgeyadeva was up against Mahīpāla and in A.D. 1034 Gaṅgeyadeva conquered Vārāṇasī from Mahīpāla. In c. A.D. 1038 Mahīpāla was succeeded to the throne by his son Nayapāla (c. A.D. 1038-55). Around the same time the Kalachuri king Gaṅgeyadeva was succeeded by his son Lakshmikarṇa or Karṇa. Karṇa continued his father's policies against the Pāla kingdom. Nayapāla was succeeded by his son Vigrahapāla III (c. A.D. 1055-70). During Vigrahapāla's reign, too, the Kalachuri king Karṇa or Lakshmikarṇa led an expedition against the Pāla kingdom. During the expedition conducted against Nayapāla, Lakshmikarṇa could advance only up to Magadha. But in the expedition that Lakshmikarṇa conducted

Chedi King Karṇa

[1] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. pp. 137-9.
[2] Cf. Irda copper-plate inscription of Nayapāladeva. See R. C. Majumdar—op. cit. p. 133.
[3] Amiya Kumar Banerji (ed.)—West Bengal District Gazetteers: Hooghly. Calcutta, 1972.
[4] Op. cit. p. 247.

against Gauḍa (meaning the Pāla kingdom) and Vaṅga (which was outside the Pāla hegemony). Lakshmikarṇa, at least, advanced up to Paikor (in Birbhum district) in Gauḍa where he had an encounter with the king of Gauḍa. This contention is proved by an inscription bearing the name of Lakshmikarṇa (Chedi king Karṇa) on a stone pillar at Paikor within Murarai police station area in the modern Birbhum district. The Gauḍa king referred to in this Kalachuri expedition is undoubtedly the Pāla king.

Paikor inscription of Karṇa

"The inscription refers to the Chedi king Karṇa . . . (whose) invasion of Bengal, before the discovery of this inscription, was a mere conjecture, based on some expressions found in the *praśastis* of the Kalachuris and in the Tibetan life of the Buddhist saint Atīśa-Dipaṁkara. The present record of Karṇa-rāja places the event beyond the realm of controversy. It is very probable that Karṇa by following up his victory over Rājyapāla, the Gurjara king of Kanauj, proceeded east-wards and invaded the dominions of the Pālas. His route must have been through south Bihar (ancient Magadha) and Bhagalpur (ancient Aṅga), till he came to the Rāḍha country. The situation of Paikor at the north western limit of the country suggests that as soon as the invading monarch penetrated so far into the heart of the Pāla domains the Pāla king must have made peace with the invader . . . Paikor is about three miles to the east of Murarai station on the loop line of the Eastern Railway."[1] It is therefore very difficult to say who, the Kalachuri or the Pāla king, suffered defeat.[2] But it is quite evident that a peace was made between the two, possibly at the initiative of Atīśa Dipaṁkara, the Buddhist saint. According to Sandhyākaranandī, the author of the *Rāmacharita*, Vigrahapāla defeated Karṇa and married his daughter Yauvanaśrī and thus an alliance was cemented through the marriage. While the second fact is probably correct, the first one may be an exaggeration by a court poet of the Pāla king Rāmapāla.

Īśvaraghosha of Ḍhekkarī

In the 11th century the Pāla hold over West Bengal was no longer as firm as it was during the days of Devapāla or Mahīpāla. A chief, probably formally the administrator of a *maṇḍala* or district, calling himself Mahāmāṇḍalika Īśvaraghosha issued a

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1 Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1921-22. pp. 78-9.

2 D. C. Sircar—*Pāla Yuger Naba-ābiskrita Śilālekha* in *Rabīndra Bhāratī Patrikā*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1380 B.S. A new inscription found at Sian, near Bolpur seems to confirm that the Pāla emperor did defeat Karṇa. The inscription was issued by a feudatory king of the Pālas.

land grant, the Ramganj copper-plate, in which he assumed the style of an independent king. The Ramganj copper-plate grant, though not dated, can, on palaeographic grounds, be assigned to the 11th century A.D.[1] Īśvaraghosha was a contemporary of Vigrahapāla III. He issued a grant from a place called Ḍhekkari—probably the administrative headquarters of the *maṇḍala* under the charge of Īśvaraghosha. According to Haraprasad Sastri, A. K. Maitreya and R. C. Majumdar[2] this Ḍhekkari is to be identified with the place called Dhekur near Katwa town, in the neighbouring Burdwan district. In this connexion it may be mentioned that just beyond the southern border of the Birbhum district, on the bank of the Damodar river in the Burdwan district, there is an 11th century temple (on stylistic considerations) which is locally called Ichhāighosher-*deul*. This Ichhāighosh was probably none other than Īśvaraghosha of Ḍhekkari. Ichhāighosher-*deul* is situated inside a *pargana* that goes by the name of *Gopabhūm pargana;* and this *Gopabhūm pargana* once used to be ruled by Gopa or Sadgopa kings (local chiefs?) of Amragarh and Dignagar. Ichhāighosh or Īśvaraghosha might have been one of the earliest known Gopa or Sadgopa kings. The *maṇḍala* of which Ḍhekkari was the headquarters might have included the southern and south-eastern portions of the modern Birbhum district.

The Kalachuri power was destroyed by the third quarter of the 11th century, i.e. during the reign of Vigrahapāla III's second son Śurapāla II. But before the Pālas could take advantage of this, they had to face an invasion from the Chālukyas of Karnāṭaka around the year A.D. 1068 (i.e. during the reign of Vigrahapāla's eldest son Mahīpāla II). The two Chālukya invasions that followed in quick succession were of far-reaching political consequences for Bengal. The most notable among these was the establishment of a Karṇāta Kshatriya family in Rāḍha. This Karṇāṭa Kshatriya Sena family, within a short time, established itself as a family of chiefs of local importance somewhere in Rāḍha. As we shall see afterwards, there are grounds to believe that the Senas established themselves as *de facto* ruling powers somewhere in the Birbhum district, in the northern Rāḍha country. A few years later, the Somavaṁsi ruler (of Orissa) Mahāśivagupta Yayāti

[1] Nanigopal Majumdar—'Rāmganj copper-plate of Īśvaraghosha', in Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III. pp. 149-57.
[2] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 146 & Niharranjan Ray—op. cit. pp. 420 & 487.

conquered portions of southern Rāḍha. Eastern Bengal was already beyond the political control of the Pālas. Thus, towards the middle of the 11th century A.D. the fabric of Pāla sovereignty was crumbling to dust.

Revolt of Divya or Divyoka & Rāmapāla's confederacy against Bhīma

Taking the weakening of the Pāla authority as an opportunity, Divya, a high administrative official of the Pālas in Varendrī—belonging to the Kaivartta caste—rose in revolt against the Pālas. As soon as Mahīpāla II advanced with his ill-organized army to curb the revolt of Divya, the former was killed and a Kaivartta kingdom was established in Varendrī. The revolt, the consequent dispossession of Mahīpāla III and the subsequent recovery of Varendrī by Mahīpāla's brother Rāmapāla have been described in details by Sandhyākaranandī, the court poet of Rāmapāla, in his *Rāmacharita*.[1] In order to regain his paternal kingdom Rāmapāla literally travelled from door to door to enlist the support of powerful chiefs, many of whom were formerly and some still nominally were vassals of the Pālas. By lavish offer of land, wealth and authority, Rāmapāla was able to persuade a number of these chiefs, in possession of well equipped forces, to come to his side. The detailed list of these independent or semi-independent rulers given in the *Rāmacharita* and annotated by a contemporary commentator is of great historical importance. This list provides a vivid and interesting picture of the political dismemberment of West Bengal caused by the declining authority of the Palas.[2] This list, *inter alia*, includes the names of Śūrapāla the ruler of Kujāvatī, Bhāskara or Mayagalasiṁha the ruler of Uchchhāla, Pratāpasiṁha, the chief of Ḍhekkariya, Narasiṁhārjuna the chief of Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala* and Vijaya-rājā of Nidrāvalī among the allies of Rāmapāla.

Kujāvatī

According to Gaurihar Mitra,[3] there is a village in Santal Parganas district of Bihar, about 14 miles to the north of Nayadumka and about 25 miles from the Birbhum border which still bears the name Kujāvatī. If the supposition is right, then it is probable that the chief of Kujāvatī held sway over some parts of the western areas of the present Bibhum district which

1 Radhagovinda Basak (tr. & ed.)—*Gauḍakavi Sandhyākaranandī Birachita Rāmacharita* (2nd ed.). Calcutta, 1953.
2 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. pp. 149-50.
3 Gaurihar Mitra *Birbhūmer Itihās*, Vol. I. Suṛi, 1343 B.S. p. 59.

Uchchhāla

includes the police station areas of Mahammad Bazar, Suri and Rajnagar.

According to Nagendranath Basu[1] and Gaurihar Mitra[2] the Uchchhāla kingdom is to be indentified with Jainujhiāl *pargana* spread out in the thanas of Suri, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar and Bolpur in the modern Birbhum district. R. D. Banerji could not agree to this identification and argued that if the phonetic similarity between Uchchhāla and Ujhiāl be the only ground for assuming that Jainujhiāl *pargana* in Birbhum represents the old Uchchhāla, then it becomes difficult to negate the claims of other places in Bengal having Ujhiāl as suffix to the first name, and there are several such places in Bengal.[3]

Ḍhekkari or Ḍhekkariya

According to Nagendranath Basu[4] Ḍhekkari was in Goalpara or in Kamrup district of Assam. Nanigopal Mazumdar supported Basu's stand; but according to Haraprasad Sastri, A. K. Maitreya, R. C. Majumdar and Niharranjan Ray, Ḍhekkari is to be identified with a village called Dhekur near Katwa town in the neighbouring Burdwan district of West Bengal. In view of the fact that the name of Pratāpasiṁha of Ḍhekkariya occurs along with the names of the feudatory chiefs of West Bengal proper in the *Rāmacharita* and also in view of the fact that Rāmapāla got his allies mostly from among the chiefs of West Bengal, the second identification appears to be more plausible. Nothing, however, is known about the extent of jurisdiction of the king of Ḍhekkariya. But if we assume that Ichhāighosh who built his temple on the Ajoy river, was none other than Īśvaraghosha of Ḍhekkari and that the *maṇḍala* on which Īśvaraghosha presided was more or less conterminous with the Gopabhūm *pargana* the Gopa or Sadgopa chiefs of which generally bore the title Ghosha, then it can only be presumed that his sway also extended over some parts of the present Birbhum district comprising the southern thanas of Khayrasol, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar, Bolpur and Nanur. Īśvaraghosha's successor Pratāpasiṁha probably also held sway over these areas.

Kajaṅgala

Kayaṅgala or Kajaṅgala was the name by which the north-western portion of northern Rāḍha was known at least from the 7th century A.D. According to Hieun-tsang, Kie-chu-u-khi-lo

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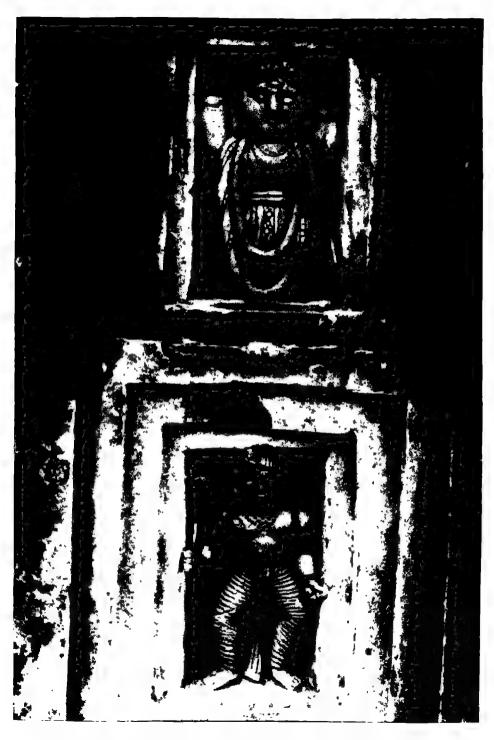
[1] Nagendranath Basu—*Baṅger Jātiya Itihās: Rājanyakāṇḍa*. Calcutta, 1321 B.S. p. 199.
[2] Gaurihar Mitra—op. cit. p. 58.
[3] Rakhaldas Bandyopadhya—*Baṅglār Itihās* (2nd edn.), Calcutta. p. 297.
[4] Nagendranath Basu—op. cit. pp. 250-1.

3. Panels depicting *Jagannātha* and *Balarāma* on the *Rekha deul* at Surul.

4 Left archway panel of the *Lakshmī-Janārdana* temple at Surul depicting from top below: enthronement of *Rāma* and *Sita*, fire sacrifice by the *munis* and personal toilet scenes.

or Kajaṅgala was a forest-covered arid tract where iron ore used to be found. Twenty miles to the south of Rajmahal (Sahibganj) in the Santal Parganas district of Bihar, on the Eastern Railway Loop line there is a village called Kakjole. According to R. C. Majumdar and Niharranjan Ray, this place still bears the memory of the name Kajaṅgala; it probably had been the administrative headquaters of the district signified by the name Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala*. This Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala* might have included some portions of the present north Birbhum, viz. the areas within the police stations of Murarai, Nalhati and Rampurhat. But the mention of Kajaṅgala as a *maṇḍala* raises a question. It is assumed that from about the 9th to about the 13th century Uttara-Rāḍha itself formed a *maṇḍala* within Vardhamāna-*bhukti*; but mention of Kajaṅgala as a *maṇḍala* means that either Uttara-Rāḍha was divided into two *maṇḍalas* within Vardhamāna-*bhukti* or Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala* comprising some portions of cultural northern Rāḍha was outside the jurisdiction of Vardhamāna-*bhukti*.

Nidrāvalī & Vijaya-rājā

Among Rāmapāla's allies, the *Rāmacharita* mentions the name of one Vijaya-rājā of Nidrāvalī. So far, no identification of Nidrāvalī has been possible. But could this Vijaya-rājā be identified with Vijayasena? Vijayasena's grandfather Hemantasena immigrated to Rāḍha from Karṇāṭa in the south. During the days of political turmoil at the time of the reign of Mahīpāla, Vijayasena's father had probably carved out a principality for the family somewhere in Rāḍha, and in course of time possibly got recognition from the Pāla kings as a feudatory or vassal chief. From the inscription found in Paikor in Murarai police station bearing the name of Rājā Vijayasena[1] it seems probable that the principality the Senas carved out for themselves in Rāḍha was in the northern part of Birbhum. Could this principality be the same as Nidrāvalī and Vijayarājā be identified with Vijayasena?[2]

It thus seems probable that during the time of Rāmapāla, parts of West Birbhum were under the dominance of Śūrapāla of Kujāvatī (and parts of North Birbhum comprised the kingdom of Narasiṁhārjuna of Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala*. Pratāpasiṁha, the king of Ḍhekkariya, probably administered certain portions of the south and south-east of the present district of Birbhum.

1 A. Mitra (ed.)—Census 1951: West Bengal District Handbook—Birbhum, Calcutta, 1954. p. 149.
2 Radhagovinda Basak—op. cit. p. xxvii.

Whether Bhāskara or Mayagalasiṁha of Uchchhāla ruled over at least in Jainujhiāl *pargana*, spread out in the thanas of Suri, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar and Bolpur, is a matter of conjecture. If Vijaya-rājā of Nidrāvalī is identified with Vijayasena, the problem still remains about the location and extension of his Nidrāvalī kingdom. The king of Gauḍa, i.e. the Pāla king, probably held direct sway over the rest of the present district, viz. the central and eastern parts of the district, which include tracts within the thanas of Labhpur, Mayureswar, Sainthia and Rampurhat.

Chodagaṅga's invasion

With the help of his allies Rāmapāla defeated and killed Bhīma, Divya's nephew, who was then ruling over Varendrī and re-annexed Varendrī to Pāla kingdom. Rāmapāla lived up to a considerably old age and restored to the dynasty some of its former glory. But taking advantage of the weakness Rāmapāla's son Kumārapāla (c. A.D. 1120-5), Anantavarman Chodagaṅga of Orissa attacked Bengal. Anantavarman was, however, defeated by Vaidyadeva, the able general of Kumārapāla. But it is not only an external enemy that Kumārapāla had to tackle, he had to suppress the rebellion of some of his feudatory chiefs also. His brother Madanapāla (c. A.D. 1140-55), who succeeded Kumārapāla's son, Gopāla III, likewise had to defend his kingdom against the inroads of the Chālukyas and Gāhaḍavālas and keep his rebellious feudatories contented by giving them more authority and control over their territories. The most significant of the troubles which the Pālas had to face during the reign of Madanapāla was the one created by the Karṇāṭa ruler of Mithila. This Karṇāṭa ruler found an ally in Vijayasena, whose father possibly was a feudatory chief or a vassal of the Pālas in Rāḍha. Vijayasena became, for all practical purposes, an independent ruler, ruling over considerable portions of Rāḍha and Vaṅga (he snatched away a portion of territory from the Varmans of Vikrampur). The Karṇāṭas of Mithila and the Karṇāṭa-Kshatriya Senas of Bengal together defeated Madanapāla on the banks of the river Kalindi in Malda district. On the death of Madanapāla, his son inherited a small kingdom comprising central and eastern Bihar and portions of northern Bengal. The latter he lost to the Senas within four years of his accession, i.e. by A.D. 1155. It is probable that soon after Kumārapāla's death the Senas asserted their supremacy over other feudatory chiefs and vassals of the Pālas then ruling over

Rise of the house of Senas

different parts of West Bengal and became almost an independent ruling dynasty.

Pāla administration

The Pāla kingdom, like the Gupta empire in Bengal, was divided into several *bhuktis* and *bhuktis* into *maṇḍalas*, *maṇḍalas* into *vishayas* and *vishayas* into several *bīthis* for administrative convenience. But unlike the Gupta administration that preceded or the Sena administration that followed, the Pāla administration, at least in the 11th and 12th centuries, was not very centralized. This is evident from the fact that the man in charge of the *bhukti* adminitration—a government official—became less important than the *māṇḍalika* or the *mahāmāṇḍalika* who often had been a feudatory chief or a vassal. *Mahāmāṇḍalika* Iśvaraghosha of Ḍhekkari and Narasiṁhārjuna of Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala* or Jayasiṁha of Daṇḍa-*bhukti-maṇḍala* definitely wielded more powers than the *bhukti-pati* of Vardhamāna-*bhukti* which comprised the above *maṇḍalas*. The *bhukti-pati* of Vardhamāna did not possibly enjoy any command over other vassal chiefs like the chief of Uchchhāla or a Kujāvatī whose territories were formally within his *bhukti*. Due to the system of rule through over-lordship, over-vassals and feudatory chiefs, the *bhukti* possibly became an administrative unit of little significance during the rule of the later Pālas. Herein lay the weakness of the Pāla empire. Whenever a weak Pāla king was threatened or got involved in conflict with any foreign power, the vassal chiefs acted as independent kings. An exemplary case is the instance of Iśvaraghosha of Ḍhekkari, who was only a *mahāmāṇḍalika* possessing none of the titles of a paramount sovereign. He curiously arrogated to himself the privilege of issuing orders to Rājans, Rājanyakas, Rājñīs, Raṇakas and so forth.[1] The powers of the feudatory chiefs possibly increased after the death of Mahīpāla, when so many feudatory chiefs had to be given the status of *māṇḍalika* and the composition of the *maṇḍalas* altered in proportion with the increase of the powers of the vassal chiefs declared as *māṇḍalikas*. Till about the time of the invasion of Rajendra Chola, Uttara-Rāḍha formed one *maṇḍala*; in its place there appeared several *maṇḍalas* by the first quarter of the 11th century, e.g. the *maṇḍala* governed by *mahāmāṇḍalika* Iśvaraghosha of Ḍhekkari and Kajaṅgala-*maṇḍala*.

The district has yielded a number of artefacts, datable, on

1 N. G. Mazumdar—Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III. Rajshahi, 1929, p. 150.

Archaeological evidence about the Pāla period

stylistic grounds, to the Pāla period. In 1946, an excavation team, led by K. G. Goswami of the University of Calcutta, found at Chandidas-Nanur within the police station area of Nanur remnants of sculptures which bear marks of Pāla stylistic features of the 10th and 11th centuries. This team also discovered architectural members from the same ground-level. The historicity of these finds were corroborated by a subsequent excavation in 1963-64 done at the same mound by a team from the Archaeological Survey of India.[1] "The excavation revealed that the site had been in occupation from proto-historic, through historical, including medieval to modern times."[2]

Religion

The Pāla kings were devout Buddhists, professing their faith in Mahāyāna Tāntric Buddhism but they were reasonably tolerant about the other religions of which the then Brahminical Tāntric Hinduism had very little difference with Mahāyāna Tāntric cults. Besides, the later Pāla kings, as we have noticed, had very little power over their feudatory chiefs and vassals, many of whom were Brahminical Hindus. As a result of these factors, Brahminism and Jainism too flourished in their domain unhindered. But be it Mahāyāna Buddhism, Śaivism, Śāktaism or Vaishṇavism of Paurānic Brahminical variety or Jainism—every religion in Bengal at that time was tinged by Tāntric theory and practice. Although during the time of the Pālas there developed a distinct style of sculpture and painting in Bengal, these arts flourished more under the patronage of wealthy individuals, traders and feudatory chiefs rather than under the direct patronage of the kings. The image of the Bengali serpent goddess Manasā, found in Paikor in the jurisdiction of Murarai police station bearing the inscribed name of Vijayasena, on the pedestal holding the icon, was probably consecrated by Vijayasena, for the benefit of his folkish Hindu subjects.[3] But the Vajra-tārā icon of the Mahāyāna Tāntric Buddhism, stylistically datable to the 10th or 11th century, found among the extensive ruins of the Pāla period, in Labhpur village, was definitely made on the orders of some one belonging to the Pāla family.[4] The ruins of a *Rekha-deul* type of

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[1] Indian Archaeology: A Review, 1963-64, New Delhi, 1965.

[2] op. cit. loc. cit.

[3] op. cit. p. 168.

[4] Indian Archaeology: A Review, 1961-62. New Delhi, 1963, p. 59; and P. C. Das Gupta, *Director of Archaeology, West Bengal* (in an interview in 1969).

temple of the 10th or 11th century, discovered by digging a mound in a field within Bolpur police station area, on the road from Bolpur to Ilambazar, can also be ascribed to the period.[1]

According to Gaurihar Mitra:[2] "Around the middle of the 11th century, the Nātha-panthī tāntric Śaivas wielded considerable influence in Birbhum. In the Nandigrama area within Murarai police station, myths and legends are in currency about a certain Nātha-gosvāmī. People still venerate a place supposed to represent his tomb. The Baśishṭha associated with the legend of the consecration of the Tāntric divinity, 'Tara', at Tarapur (Tārāpiṭh) in Rampurhat police station, according to some, was a Nātha-panthī Tāntric and a predecessor of Mīṇanātha or Matsyendranātha. It is supposed that the former was the precursor of the Nātha-panthī yogis of Birbhum area," But unfortunately there is hardly any credible historical evidence in support of these beliefs.

A number of Jain icons have been found from different places in the Birbhum district, which, on stylistic considerations, are assigned to the Pāla period.[3]

Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva & socio-economic & ecological condition of Uttara-Rāḍha

A good amount of information about Birbhum at the end of Pāla rule and at the beginning of Sena rule (in parts of Rāḍha), i.e. relating to the 11th century, is found in the Belava inscription of Varman king Bhojavarman of Vikrampur[4] and in the Bhuvaneswar inscription of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva.[5] Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva was Mahāsandhi-Vigrahika-mantrī or the defence minister of the Varman king Harivarman. This Smārta Brahmin, belonging to the Sāmavediya Kauṭhum śākhādhayī section and of Sāvarṇa *gôtra*, originally hailed from the village Siddhala in Rāḍha. This Siddhala-*grāma* has been identified with the village Sidhuli within the jurisdiction of the Suri police station in Birbhum district.[6] Siddhala-*grāma* was situated in the waterless, arid and jungly part of Uttara-Rāḍha where villages were few and far between. To such a waterless and arid country Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva gave a water-reservoir (or tank). He also established a Nārāyaṇaśilā in his

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1 The Ananda Bazar Patrika. Calcutta, 28 May 1962.
2 Gaurihar Mitra—*Bīrbhūmer Itihās*, Vol. I. Suri, 1343 B.S. pp. 67-8.
3 Promode Lal Paul—"Jainism in Bengal", in India Culture, Vol. III. Calcutta, 1936-37.
4 N. G. Mazumdar—op. cit. p. 24.
5 ibid. pp. 25-41.
6 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. pp. 22, 202, 320 & 636; and Niharranjan Ray—op. cit. p. 148.

ancestral village and to house this Nārāyaṇaśilā he built a temple in Siddhala-*grāma*.[1] The tank he excavated stood in front of the temple. Siddhala-*grāma* seems to have been a seat of Brahmins belonging to the Sāvarṇa *gôtra*. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva enjoyed a special status amongst them. He, a Smārta Brahmin, was a fierce opponent (dialectician) of the Buddhists,[2] and was a great scholar of *mimāṁsā, siddhānta, tantra, āgama, gaṇita, jyotirvidyā* (especially horoscopy), *arthaśāstra, dharma, nīti, smṛiti* and *āyurveda* and had written treatises on all these subjects. The excavation of tanks and the establishment of temples were perhaps regarded as forms of social service and helped the persons rendering such services to gain prestige and influence. These two inscriptions also seem to suggest that Brahmin Vaishṇavas worshipped Vishṇu or Nārāyaṇa. Apart from the significant information on social life that these two inscriptions provided, the ecological information provided by them are of no mean significance. It seems that due to its waterlessness the northern Rāḍha region was arid and jungly and as a consequence was sparsely populated. As it was sparsely populated the villages were situated far from each other.

Rise of the house of Senas

When the Senas came to be reckoned as the premier political power in Bengal during the tenure of Vijayasena (c. A.D. 1095 or 1125 to 1157), they had already completed more than two generations' residence in Western Bengal. It is now generally assumed that the Brahma-Kshatriya or the Karṇāṭa-Kshatriya Senas immigrated to Bengal from Karṇāṭaka with one of the Karṇāṭa invaders of Bengal and stayed back to settle down in some sparsely populated area of Rāḍha. In course of time the first Sena settler became the master of the area where he had settled. By becoming the master of the area the first Sena settler qualified himself to become a service or a tenure holder under the Pālas. This ancestor of the later Sena kings, by his acumen and ingenuity, soon earned for himself and his family a principality where he and his successors began to rule as vassals of the Pāla sovereign. Sāmantasena,[3] the grandfather of Vijayasena, in all probability, was the first in the family to establish himself as a vassal and his son Hemantasena, described as a Mahārājādhirāja in the inscriptions of his more illustrious successors, had their principality

1 N. G. Mazumdar—op. cit. pp. 24 & 40-1.
2 Bhuvaneswar Inscription of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, *vide* N. G. Mazumdar—op. cit. p. 39.
3 N. G. Mazumdar—op. cit. 'Deopārā Inscription of Vijayasena', p. 43 & 'Mādhāinagar Inscription of Lakshmaṇasena', p. 107.

somewhere in the Birbhum district with headquarters situated not far from the Ganges (Bhagirathi).[1] Paikor, in the Murarai thana area, from where a Manasā image has been found with the name of Vijayasena inscribed on the pillar-like pedestal,[2] is about 20 miles rom the Ganges (Bhagirathi) now—as the crow flies. Not far from Paikor, is the village called Bīrnagar, also within the Murarai police station area. There are extensive ruins at this place, which according to the local people are of a palace of a certain legendary king named Bīrasena. Some would like to connect this legendary Bīrasena with the Sena family and suggest that Bīrnagar had been the seat of administration of the feudatory Senas.[3] According to some Sena inscriptions, there had been a person called Bīrasena in the family but according to very same sources, this ancestor of the Sena kings of Bengal, named Bīrasena had never come to Bengal. It might be possible that the legendary person of Bīrnagar was not actually an ancestor of the Sena kings but a scion of the Sena family. To come back to history from legend, taking advantage of the weakening of the Pāla hold over Bengal under Kumārapāla and his son Madanapāla, Vijayasena, the third head of the family, led a number of successful expeditions against the loyal vassals of the Pālas, other neighbouring kings and against the Pālas themselves and eventually captured the sovereign power in Bengal. The Deopārā inscription records the names of the kings over whom Vijayasena scored victories. One of them was Nānya (the Karṇāṭa chief of Mithilā), another was Vīra, possibly Vīraguna of Koṭāṭabī (Koṭeswar in Bankura district) mentioned in the *Rāmacharita* of Sandhyākaranandī. The inscription also refers to the name of Rāghava, who might have been the second son of the Utkala king of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga. The king of Gauda who is stated to have fled before the advancing army of Vijayasena might have been none other than Madanapāla.[4] Vijayasena concluded a diplomatic alliance by marrying Vilāsadevī, the princess of the Śūra family of Apara-Mandāra in Dakshiṇa-Rāḍha.[5] In spite of his eminent success, it does not appear that the final conquest of Gauḍa was achieved by Vijayasena.[6] But even though Gauḍa and the por-

Vijayasena and Paikor inscription

Exploits of Vijayasena

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[1] loc. cit.
[2] ibid. p. 168; & Asok Mitra—Census 1951; West Bengal District Census Handbooks: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1954. p. 149.
[3] Gaurihar Mitra—op. cit. pp. 66-7; & Asok Mitra—op. cit., loc. cit.
[4] N. G. Majumdar—op. cit. 'Deopārā Inscription'. pp. 83-4.
[5] Niharranjan Ray—op. cit. pp. 502-03.
[6] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. pp. 211-2.

tion of the old Gauḍa kingdom which lay to the east of the Bhagirathi and north of the Ganges remained unconquered by Vijayasena the areas within the present district of Birbhum which once formed a part of the kingdom of Gauḍa were definitely brought under Vijayasena's control. It seems probable that, even before Vijayasena embarked upon a policy of conquest, his father Hemantasena had successfully made a number of loyal vassal chiefs of the Pālas in the northern-Rāḍha subservient to him and in the process Hemantasena had probably extended his sway over most of the present Birbhum district and its adjoining areas in the Santal Paraganas and Burdwan districts. Although a conjecture, this is based on the argument that, had Vijayasena not had the backing of wealth and manpower of a sufficiently big territory, it might not have been possible for him to embark upon such an ambitious policy of conquest and annexation.

Vallālasena

Vijayasena died around A.D. 1158 and was succeeded by his son Vallālasena. It was during the reign of the latter that the last vestige of Pāla rule anywhere was lost when in A.D. 1162 Govindapāla lost Magadha—the last citadel of Pāla power. Although the authenticity of the work *Vallālacharita* is questionable, the information that the domains of Vallālasena comprised five provinces, viz. Vaṅga, Varendra, Rāḍha, Bagḍi and Mithilā, given by the book, seems to be correct.[1] Since Varendra on the north and Bagḍi (in Midnapur district) on the south were included in Vallālasena's domains it seems that the whole of Rāḍha including the areas within the present district of Birbhum, was under the hegemony of Vallālasena. Lakshmaṇasena, the son of Vallālasena, succeeded his father about the year 1179. He added the epithet Gauḍeswara to his imperial titles. Even if we assume that Vijayasena did not become the master of the city of Gauḍa or of the old Gauḍa kingdom in its entirety, it seems probable that his son Vallālasena became the unquestioned master of the old Gauḍa kingdom including the city of Gauḍa. So the addition of Gauḍeswara to his imperial titles by Lakshmaṇasena does not mean that he was the first Sena ruler to annex the greater part of the territories within the old Gauḍa kingdom.

According to the evidence of the Naihāṭi copper-plate grant of Vallālasena,[2] Uttara-Rāḍha, comprising the greater portion of the modern districts of Birbhum and Murshidabad formed a *maṇḍala* within Vardhamāna-*bhukti* as it did during the reign

1 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 217.
2 N. G. Majumdar—op. cit. pp. 68-80.

of the early Pālas. But during the time of Lakshmaṇasena, possibly for better administration, the unwieldy *bhukti* of Vardhamāna was divided into two *bhuktis*. The newly formed Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti*[1] possibly comprised the greater portion of the old Uttara-Rāḍha-*maṇḍala* of Vardhamāna-*bhukti*. The place Kaṅkagrāma, from which the *bhukti* derived its name, is identified by some writers with Kākjole near Rajmahal in the Santal Parganas district of Bihar, while others have identified it with Kāgrām within the jurisdiction of Bharatpur thana in Mursidabad district. "The only facts that may be regarded as beyond dispute are that the new *bhukti* embraced considerable portions of the valley of the Mor river. It doubtless included parts of Birbhum and Murshidabad districts.... It is possible that the new *bhukti* of Kaṅkagrāma represents the old kingdom of Gauḍa-Karṇasuvarṇa..."[2] "Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti* included a number of administrative units styled as *vīthi*. In the Bardhamāna-*bhukti*, the *maṇḍala* came between the *bhukti* and the *vīthi*. The new *bhukti* seems to have been split up directly into *vīthis*."[3] According to R. C. Majumdar, the southern part of Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti* called the Dakshiṇa-*vīthi* embraced Uttara-Rāḍha or at least that portion of it which was watered by the river Mor or the Mayurakshi. But this is hardly acceptable, firstly, on the ground that, the new *bhukti* was composed mainly of Uttara-Rāḍha and very little else besides; secondly, the valley of the Mor or the Mayurakshi can hardly be placed in the south of Uttara-Rāḍha by any stretch of imagination; and thirdly, from the evidence of the Naihāṭi copper-plate inscription of Vallālasena, it seems that Svalpa-dakshiṇa-*vīthi* comprised certain portions of the present Katwa suddivision of the Burdwan district as well as some portions of the southern thanas of the present Murshidabad district. The western and north-western parts of the Birbhum district forming the valley of the Mayurakshi river was perhaps far north of Svalpa-dakshiṇa-*vīthi*.

Uttara-Rāḍha & Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti*

There was several important Sanskrit poets in Lakshmaṇasena's court of whom Jayadeva was the most important.[4] Jayadeva was the most significant poet of the medieval Sanskrit literture, just

Jayadeva, the poet

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[1] cf. Lakshmaṇasena's Śaktipur copper-plate inscription of the third or the sixth year of his reign; *vide* Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XXI, pp. 211-4 and *Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā*, Vol. 37, p. 216.

[2] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 28.

[3] loc. cit.

[4] Bengali, or at least an early form of it, had already become a spoken language during the times of the Senas. But the language of the court and the written language of the upper classes continued to be Sanskrit.

when the modern Indian vernaculars were establishing themselves as vehicles of literary expression.

Jayadeva himself does not give any independent clue to his date; but the traditional accounts agree in placing him in the court of Lakshmaṇasena; and apart from the poet's own references to Dhoyī and Āchārya Govardhana which point to the Sena rule,[1] two verses by him, included in the anthology of Sanskrit poetry, called *Saduktikarṇāmrita*, compiled under the patronage of the Senas, also testify to the fact of his existence during the Sena period. Reference to Dhoyī and Āchārya Govardhana by Jayadeva goes a long way to corroborate the tradition that the poet was a court poet of Lakshmaṇasena, since the first two had also been at the court of the same king.

Jayadeva has mentioned the name of Kendubilva as the place of his birth or home. The name of the place appears in several variant forms in manuscripts, such as, Kindu, Tindu and Sindhu. One of the earliest commentators on Jayadeva's *Gita-Govinda*, Rāṇā Kumbha of Mewar (1433-68) took it as the name of the village where the poet resided or as his śāsana; Chaitanyadāsa believed it to be the name of his *grāma* and *kula* (family); Sankarānanda thought it to be the *vritti-grāma* of Jayadeva's family.[2] The identification of this village poses a great problem. The Maithili scholars identify a village called Kendoli near Jenjharpur town in Tirhut-Darbhanga area of Bihar as Jayadeva's Kenduli.[3] Oriya scholars are of the opinion that Jayadeva's Kendubilva can convincingly be indentified with the village Kenduli-Śāsana in Balitana police station area of the Puri district, lying between the Prachi and the Kushabhadra rivers. In support of their hypothesis these scholars refer to some 16th century and still later works where the authors are supposed to have stated that the poet was a native of Utkala.[4] But the evidence of the authors writing almost four hundred years or more after the demise of the poet is of no more value than claims made on the subject by the writers of the 20th century.

In Bengal, tradition associates Jayadeva with the village Jaydev-Kenduli (J. L. No. 63) within Ilambazar thana in the Birbhum

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1 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 369.
2 R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op. cit. p. 368 ff.
3 Asitkumar Bandyopadhyaya—*Bāngālā Sāhityer Itibritta*, Vol. I. Calcutta (2nd edn.), 1963. p 80.
4 Savitri Raut—'Jayadeva's Birthplace', in Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, 14 June 1966.

district on the river Ajoy, where an annual festival of the *Bāuls* and *Sahajivā* Vaishṇavas takes place on the Poush-Saṁkrānti day (middle of January). The fair held in the memory of the poet is quite old. But there is no definite information about the exact time from when the fair started. So the evidence of this old fair of *Bāuls* and *Bairāgīs* cannot be taken as a conclusive evidence in support of Jaydev-Kenduli's claim to be regarded as Jayadeva's Kendubilva. For the present the question about Jayadeva's place of birth and residence must remain an open question.[1] The circumstantial evidence of Jayadeva's status as a court poet of Lakshmaṇasena cannot be taken as the final proof of Jayadeva's Bengalihood.

Jayadeva was a Panchopāsak Smārta Brahmin who had equal devotion towards Śiva, Śakti and Vishṇu cults and wrote equally well on the cults of Śiva and Śakti,[2] as also about the value of submissiveness, devotion and ecstatic love associated with the Vaishṇava Bhakti cult. Popularly, Jayadeva is believed to have been a precursor of Gauḍiya Vaishṇava Bhakti-dharma of Chaitanyadeva and as such had been a believer in the principle of ecstatic love as personified by Rādhā and Krishṇa. The most important work of Jayadeva, viz. the *Gīta-Govinda* revolves round the theme of ecstatic love of Rādhā and Krishṇa. Chaitanya made this book a gospel of Gauḍiya Vaishṇava Bhakti-dharma and the Gauḍiya Vaishṇavas made Jayadeva a saint poet and an evangelist of Gauḍiya Vaishṇava Bhakti-dharma, which Jayadeva was not. Jayadeva probably wrote his *Gīta-Govinda* at the request of a Vaishṇava patron—possibly, Lakshmaṇasena.

Last days of Lakshmaṇasena & rise of the Turko-Afghan powers

The old and devout Vaishṇava Lakshmaṇasena's rule in West Bengal was coming to an end by A. D. 1200. During the dry season of the year 1201 a cavalry led by Malik Iktiāruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtyār Khilji, a Turkish free-lance operator, who had established himself in Bihar in the previous year, was marching from Bihar-shariff towards Navadwip in Nadia where Lakshmaṇasena was camping at that time. On his way from Bihar-shariff Muhammad Bakhtyār crossed the Ganges near Raj-

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1 Sukumar Sen—*Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part I. Calcutta (3rd edn.), 1959. pp. 40-1.
M. M. Chakravarti—'Sanskrit Literature in Bengal During the Sena Rule', in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1906, pp. 160-5; Niharranjan Ray—op. cit. p. 755; R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—op cit. p. 368; Asitkumar Bandyopadhyaya—op. cit. pp. 78-9.

2 Niharranjan Ray—op. cit. pp. 674 & 751-2 and Asitkumar Bandyopadhyaya—op. cit. p. 91.

mahal and then proceeded through Santal Parganas and Birbhum towards Nadia.[1] How he took Nadia by surprise, how the old king Lakshmaṇasena took flight to East Bengal and how Bakhtyār turned towards Gauḍa-Lakshmaṇāvatī will be narrated shortly.[2] It will be sufficient to note here that Bakhtyār did not proceed towards Nadia by conquering the lands or the tracts on his march, nor did he set up any administration on the lands through which he marched by supplanting the former administration. Had he done so, he would not have any necessity to send an army under the command of Muhammad Sherān and Ahmad Sherān towards Lakhnor, in modern Birbhum district, four years after the conquest of Gauḍa, in A.D. 1206.[3] From this evidence it seems that a sizeable portion of north Rāḍha was under the effective administration of some feudatory chiefs or vassals or officials of the former Sena kings, even after the flight of Lakshmaṇasena from West Bengal. It also seems that the official who had his seat at Lakhnor[4] was of some significance, since a force had to be sent to subdue him. But then, even after this expedition, probably not all the Hindu feudatory chiefs and vassals and former officials of the Senas were properly subdued. In A.D. 1211 Bakhtyār sent Ali Mardān to annex the territory between Devkoṭe and Lakhnor to establish a proper administrative machinery.[5] Yet, in A.D. 1214 Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwāz Khilji had to make an expedition to Lakhnor to establish firmly the Turkish authority. But this expedition was mainly against the Gaṅga kings of Orissa[1] who had advanced well up to Lakhnor in the north during the

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[1] According to Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyaya (*Bāṅgālār Itihās*, Vol. I. Calcutta, 1321 B.S. pp. 322-6), it is difficult to believe Minhaj's story in the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* about Bakhtyār's invasion. According to him, Lakshmaṇasena was not alive in A.D. 1201; his son Kesavasena or Madhavasena was possibly the ruling Sena king then. Minhaj's Rai Lakshmania, therefore, could not have been Lakshmaṇasena. Secondly, where was the Nudia Minhaj speaks of; it is very difficult to identify Minhaj's Nudia with Navadwipa. Thirdly, Nudia or Navadwipa had never been the Sena capital nor even the secondary capital. So a king emperor could not have been relaxing in such a manner in an unfortified town, as has been described by Minhaj. Bakhtyār must have frightened away a Sena viceroy stationed at Nudia or Navadwipa. R. C. Majumdar (*Bāṅgāla Deśer Itihās*, Calcutta, 2nd edn., 1356 B.S. pp. 97-100) also echoes R. D. Banerji's suspicion, without however challenging the veracity of Minhaj's account. He, however, maintains that Bakhtyār's raid of Nudia was a marauding raid rather than an invasion for conquest.

[2] Jadunath Sarkar (ed.)—History of Bengal, Vol. II. Dacca, 1948. pp. 5-6.

[3] ibid. p. 10.

[4] About the identification of the place Lakhnor see later.

[5] J. N. Sarkar—op. cit. p. 10.

power-vacuum created after the flight of Lakshmaṇasena. But Ghiyāsuddin probably could not drive them out from the southern fringes of the Birbhum district[2] and the Oriya king possibly enjoyed the allegiance of some of the Hindu feudatory chiefs and former officials of the Senas still holding out in some sparsely populated pockets in the district. Some of these late 12th and early 13th century Hindu chieftains and feudatory kings are still alive in the legends and folk-memory in the Birbhum district.

There is a village called Kochujor (J.L. No. 30) in Suri police station area. The legend is that during the 12th century here reigned a local king named Rudrasaraṇ Rāy.[3] Another legend says that the local king of Lakhnor who ruled over a large part of the present district, during the turn of the century, was one Kshatriya ruler called Bīrsiṁha and that it was he who was defeated by Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz in A.D. 1214.[4] Another legend connects scions of the Sena family with the extensive ruins found in Bīrnagar in Murarai police station. Nothing very definite is known about these legendary kings.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

In the 13th century A.D. parts of the area now known as the district Birbhum probably passed under Muslim rule. The town of Lakhnor, regarded by most historians to have been situated within the boundaries of the present district seems to have been an important frontier outpost of the Muslim rulers since the early days of the Turkish conquest of western Bengal. During the first decade of the 13th century Muhammad Bakhtyār Khilji sent an expedition against the Hindu kings of Orissa. The name Lakhnor features in the chronicles of this campaign. "Shortly before his Tibet expedition he (Muhammad Bakhtyār Khilji) sent Muhammad Sherān and his brother Ahmad Sherān of his own tribe in command of an army towards Lakhnor (Nagar in the Birbhum district), and Jājnagar (kingdom of Orissa). This was intended to keep the Hindus south of the Ganges busy, and perhaps to annex the Rāḍh region permanently."[5]

There seems to be some uncertainty about the identification of

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1 According to Gaurihar Mitra (op. cit. pp. 63-4), the expedition of Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz was directed against a king called Bīrsiṁha who was of course defeated.
2 J. N. Sarkar (ed.)—op. cit. pp. 21-2.
3 Gaurihar Mitra—op. cit. p. 62; and Asok Mitra—op. cit. p. 144.
4 Gaurihar Mitra—op. cit. pp. 63-4.
5 J. N. Sarkar (ed.)—The History of Bengal, Vol. II. Dacca, 1948, p. 10.

the place name of Lakhnor. In the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* it is mentioned that Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwāz, who ruled in Bengal from A.D. 1211 to 1226, had an embankment built from Lakhnawati to Devkoṭ in (Dinajpur) on the one side and Lakhnor on the other and Stewart advanced the view that Lakhnor should be identified with Nagar, the old capital of Birbhum.[1] But this was not acceptable to Blochmann who suggested that it was more likely that the place referred to was Lakarakund, near Dubrajpur.[2] Monmohan Chakravarti, however, rejected both identifications on the argument that as Lakhnor appears to have been situated in low country, inundated by floods from time to time, for which an embankment was necessary it could not be identified with any of the two places suggested above, both of which are on high rocky ground.[3]

More recent and authoritative opinion, however, goes back to the theory that Lakhnor could be none other than Nagar, the old capital of Birbhum. J. N. Sarkar, accepting the arguments of N. K. Bhattasali,[4] writes: "There is hardly any difference of opinion among scholars that Lakhnor of the Muslim writers was situated somewhere near the ancient town of Nagar in the Birbhum district. Blochmann's *Lakarkuda* in Birbhum is to be definitely rejected in favour of *Nagar* or Rajnagar, once perhaps the capital of some Hindu Rajah as the place meant by *Lakhnor*, (Lakaur, *Langaur*, variants in the text of *Nāsiri*)......Bhattasali discusses the question of identification of Lakhnor with Nagar very ably, and his opinion I accept as accurate."[5]

It seems, as has already been pointed out, that for several centuries after the advent of the Turkish rulers in Bengal, the tract of land comprising the present district of Birbhum appears to have been relatively free from the control of Turko-Afghan overlords and the country is said to have been ruled by Hindu chiefs, known as the Bīr Rājās. O'Malley cites a reference from the Brahmāṇḍa section of the *Bhavishya Purāṇa*, where a description of the forest-clad tract of land and its inhabitants is given. The area seems to have been divided into two parts,

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1 L. S. S. O'Malley — Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910, p. 10.
2 H. Blochmann — Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal, Part I. J.A.S.B. 1873, pp. 211-12.
3 See 'Certain Disputed or Doubtful Events in the History of Bengal' in J.A.S.B., Vol. IV, No. 1, April 1908, p. 151.
4 The reference is to Bhattasali's article on the New Saktipur Grant of Lakshmanasena, J.R.A.S. 1935.
5 J. N. Sarkar — op. cit. p. 37.

Narikanda, which lay to the west of the Bhagirathi and north of the Dwarakeswari river. It extended along the Panchakuta hills on the west and approached Kikata on the north. In this district was situated the celebrated shrine of Baidyanath.. The other division was known as Virabhumi which was eminent for the shrine of Bakreswara. Among the principal rivers of this area was the Ajaya. O'Malley concludes that from this account we can gather that Nagar was the capital of the Hindu rulers and the country was known as Viradesa or Virabhumi, the modern Birbhum.

An account of the Hindu Rājās of Birbhum is available from a chronicle, the authenticity of which, however, cannot be verified owing to the absence of any corroborating evidence.[1] It is said that two brothers, Bir Singh and Chaitanya Singh, came to Birbhum from somewhere in the northwest and founded their capitals in two villages which are supposed to be still bearing their names (Birsinghpur, old J.L. No. 334, and Chaitanyapur, old J.L. No. 336, in the police station of Jajnagar). Bir Singh is credited to have been a powerful ruler with a number of smaller chieftains and landlords under him. Ruins of palaces, forts and tanks are still to be found in Birsinghpur, 6 miles west of Suri.[2] Chaitanyapur is also known as Chaitanga and more popularly as Khatanga from which a pargana has taken its name.[3]

Another reference that we get of Lakhnor is during the rule of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwāz Khilji who reigned from A.D. 1213 to 1227. Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwāz Khilji had come to the throne of Lakhnawati after rebelling against and overthrowing Ali Mardān Khilji. The early part of his reign is supported to have been occupied in consolidating his authority in Lakhnawati. The Gaṅga Emperor Anaṅgabhīma III (A.D. 1211-38) was his contemporary ruler of Orissa, whose celebrated general, Vishṇu, invaded the Rāḍha tract which was a sort of no man's land at this time, though the Muslim rulers of Lakhnawati claimed Lakhnor in Birbhum as their frontier.[4] "At any rate that frontier post was seized by Vishṇu who had carved out a frontier-march for him-

1 A summarized account of the main facts from this chronicle is given in the Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Birbhum (1924-1932), Calcutta 1937, pp. 10-11. Since there appear a number of anachronisms in this account, only the bare outlines of the events regarding the founding of the Rāj and its ultimate end is given here.
2 loc. cit.
3 loc. cit.
4 J. N. Sarkar -- op. cit. pp. 21-22.

self, south of Rāḍh, having perhaps Jājpur (Jājnagar) on the Vaitaraṇī river as the seat of his power."[1] This event is said to have caused demoralization in the Muslim camp, and no immediate attempt was made by them to recover the lost ground. However, Sultan Ghiyāsuddin set out on an expedition to recover Lakhnor probably in A.D. 1214 and this campaign turned out to be a protracted one.[2] The Chhāteśvara instription claimed success for the Orissan general who in the 'war with the Moon of Yavana kingdom...performed heroic deeds that baffled description'.[3] The testimony of *Minhāj-i-Sirāj* made the counter-claim that Lakhnor came into the possession of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin (c. 611 A.H./A.D. 1214-15) and that 'elephants and large treasure fell into the hands' of the Sultan, who 'posted his own Amirs in the Places.'[4] It is said that Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwāz Khilji succeeded not only in driving back the Orissan army but extended his southern frontier from the bank of the Ajay river to the bank of the Damodar and the borders of Vishnupur. J. N. Sarkar, however, does not accept the claim that the ruler of Jājnagar paid tribute to the Sultan, though he thinks that the Muslim army must have reached the south of the Damodar river as far as Katāsin by this time, as mentioned in *Minhāj-i-Sirāj*.[5] J. N. Sarkar adds in a footnote, "I follow Rai Bahadur Monomohan Chakravarti who gives the date of the Chhāteśvara inscription as c. 1220 A.D., and ascribes the successes described in this inscription as referring to the reign of Anaṅgabhīma III of Orissa. 'Iwaz was undoubtedly the Yavana King of this inscription.[6] *Minhāj* indirectly corroborates to a certain extent the testimony of Chhāteśvara (sic.) inscription by a clear hint that Lakhnor had slipped out of the hands of the Muslims before 'Iwaz claimed it for himself and appointed his own officers there."[7]

During the period of the next sixty years, from A.D. 1227 to 1287, as many as fifteen rulers held authority over Lakhnawati in quick succession, and ten of them were governors of Bengal sent by the imperial Court of Delhi. As J. N. Sarkar has observed, "The history of this period is a sickening record of internal dissensions, usurpation and murders which the Court of

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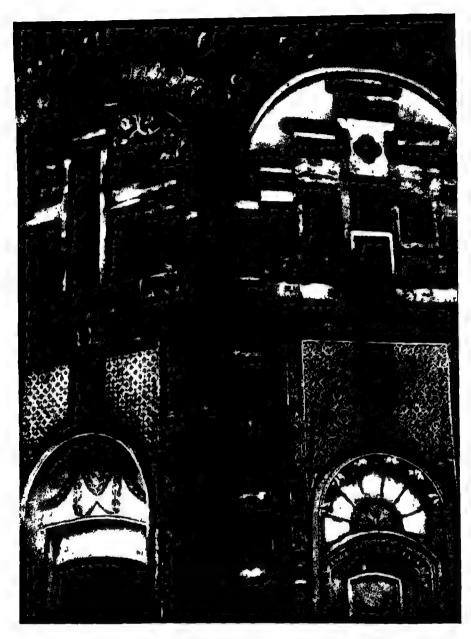
[1] loc. cit.
[2] loc. cit.
[3] Quoted by J. N. Sarkar—loc. cit.
[4] loc. cit.
[5] loc. cit.
[6] J.A.S B. LXXII. 1903. p. 119.
[7] J.A.S.B. 1903. pp 118-20, *Nāsiri*. Text. pp. 141-42; Banerji — Orissa 1; Basu. J.A.S.B. 1896. pp. 232-34.

5. The brick temple of *Śiva Chandranāth* at Hetampur.

6. Terracotta plaques on the walls of the temple of Śiva Chandranāth at Hetampur.

Delhi after the death of Sultan Iltutmish could not punish. The seizure of the government of Lakhnawati was the highest ambition of the governors of neighbouring provinces, Bihar, Oudh, Kanauj and Kārā-Mānikpur; because even after the loss of independence, Gaur-Lakhnawati retained its status of a kingdom, and its possession alone entitled a Malik to the coveted status of *Malik-ush-Sharq* or Lord of the East."[1]

Of these rulers of Bengal, Tughral Tughān Khan is perhaps the best known, and he enjoyed a fairly long lease of power, for nine years (A.D. 1236-1245). Towards the close of his reign the Hindu ruler of Jājnagar made an expedition into Rāḍha. "Tughral Tughān's contemporary on the throne of Orissa was Rājā Narasiṁhadeva I who had succeeded his father Anaṅgabhīmadeva III about 1238 A.D. He seems to have taken advantage of the withdrawal of the army and fleet of Lakhnawati to distant Kārā in the previous year to lead an expedition into Rāḍh and the frontiers of Vaṅga. In the campaigning season of 1242 he avoided rousing the suspicions of the Turks of Southern Rāḍh, strongly posted in Nagar in the Birbhum district, and sought easier conquests east of the river Bhāgirathi. This tract might have been occasionally raided during the period of the Khilji ascendancy, but no Muslim army had visited it after the death of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Khilji (1227 A.D.). Saptagrām (Sātgāon) was still unsubdued and the district of Nadia was strewn with semi-independent Hindu Rajas. These were little likely to offer any opposition to the northward expansion of the mighty Hindu power of Orissa which was their only safeguard against the rapacity of the Turks. Tughān slept over this dangerous aggression of Orissa on his immediate frontier till the emboldened enemy actually began ravaging his own possessions on the Lakhnor side in the dry season of 1243... (Tughral) could not take the field to repel the Hindu invasion till the month of Shawwal 641 A.H. (mid March, A.D. 1244) when *Minhāj-i-Sirāj*, the historian, also joined in 'this holy war'. The army of Tugharal Tughān marched along the broad highway of 'Iwaz as far as Lakhnor, and pushed further south-east after having crossed the rivers Ajay and Damodar. The army of Orissa retreated without fighting to their frontier fortress of Katāsin, in a region full of jungle and cane bushes suited for ambush and surprise.

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1 ibid. p. 42.

"On Saturday morning 6th of Ziqadah 641 (16th April 1244) the Turks delivered an assault on the fort of Katāsin, carried two ditches after hard fighting and put the Hindus to flight who left some elephants behind. As it was the time of mid-day meal, Tughral Tughān recalled his troops from the assault and ordered that nobody should vex the elephants which were evidently left in their place on the other side of the second ditch. The soldiers of the army of Islam were busy in preparing or eating their meals. A party of Orissa soldiers made a sortie from the direction of the fort to take away the elephants they had left behind in the morning; and simultaneously a small detachment of two hundred footmen and fifty *sawārs* stole their way from behind a cane-jungle and rushed upon the rear of the Muslim army.. The panic spread to the whole army of Tughral Tughān Khan. At any rate the army of Orissa kept up a hot pursuit, and the Turks did not make a stand even in their own fort of Lakhnor, 70 miles north-west of Katāsin."[1]

Thus, when the situation was so critical, Tughān Khan on his return from Katāsin sent Sharf-ul-Mulkal-Ashari and Quzi Jalāluddin Kāshāni to Delhi to seek military assistance. As a result, the governors of Kārā-Mānikpur and of Oudh were despatched in aid of Tughān Khan, but by that time the Rājā of Jājnagar had captured Lakhnor after routing and killing the local fiefholder. However, when the combined forces of Oudh and Kārā-Mānikpur reached the Rajmahal hills, the army of Orissa withdrew its siege of Lakhnawati. Around this time, however, Malik Tamar Khan, governor of Oudh, fell out with Tughān Khan, and on his turn laid siege on the city of Lakhnawati. Tughān Khan had the worst of the skirmishes that followed, and in a subsequent treaty (which was negotiated by the historian *Minhāj-i-Sirāj* himself) Tughān Khan had to relinquish his claim on Lakhnawati and Bihar to Malik Tamar Khan, and was allowed to proceed to the imperial Court with his treasure and followers.[2]

During the middle of the 13th century Sultan Mughisuddin Tughral (A.D. 1268-81) was the last and greatest of the successful Mamluks who rose from the position of a household slave to independent sovereignty at Lakhnawati in the time of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Balban. Balban could not, to begin with, keep a close watch on Bengal because of his preoccupation with the

[1] ibid. pp. 48-49.
[2] ibid. pp. 48-49.

Mongol incursions in Punjab. Taking advantage of the absence of the imperial sultan from Delhi, Tughral absolved himself of the allegiance to the imperial court, and set himself up as the independent chief at Lakhnawati. According to Barani (*Tārikh-i-Firuzshāhi*), Sultan Balban lost his sleep and appetite when the news of Tughral's assumption of sovereignty in Bengal reached him.[1] Balban probably sent his first expedition against Tughral from Oudh in 1278. The culminating stage of that campaign has been given by J. N. Sarkar in the following account. "Meanwhile, Tughral had advanced with his fleet of war-boats to the mouth of the river Sarju, more with a view to watching the movements of the imperialists than to offering fight. In spite of the lateness of the season Sultan Balban started from Oudh with the main army, and Bughra Khan (his son) was left behind to bring up the rear. When the Sultan crossed the Sarju undisputed, Tughral sailed away for Lakhnawati. In the meantime the rains began (June 1280); but the Sultan pushed forward, callous to the loss and sufferings of his troops. The fleet of boats (*bajrāhā*) was to keep in touch with the land forces, which, however, could advance very slowly on account of mud and showers, through the low-lying country. Tughral decided on the strategy of avoiding any pitched battle with the superior army of the Sultan, or presenting to the enemy any decisive point of attack. As he could not hope to defend Lakhnawati, he evaçuated it completely, and the more respectable section of its civil population also accompanied him to escape the barbarous ferocity of the Sultan. 'Tughral', says Barani, 'took the road to Jajnagar, and halted at a dry place, one day's journey from Lakhnawati', which was apparently on the other side of the Ganges, and somewhere near about the high embanked road of 'Iwaz connecting Lakhnawati and Lakhnor (Nagar) in the Birbhum district. When Balban arrived within thirty or forty *kos* of Lakhnawati, Tughral resumed his retreat in the direction of Jajnagar (in Orissa). Balban did not reach Lakhnawati perhaps before the middle of August 1280 A.D., and he halted there for some time for 'arming and reorganising his forces' perhaps till the end of the rains (middle of September 1280)."[2] Balban pressed on his pursuit of Tughral during the rainy season of the next year (1281) towards Jājnagar. Tughral who was again on his flight from Jājnagar was surprised by the advanced

[1] Quoted by J. N. Sarkar—op. cit. p. 61.
[2] ibid. pp. 63-4.

guards of Balban's army and was killed. Balban captured Lakhnawati and set up his youngest son Bughra Khan as the governor of Bengal.[1]

A general feature of the history of the house of the Balbans in Bengal (A.D. 1286-1328) was that Bengal enjoyed a fairly long respite from Khilji and Tughlaq aggressions. "Therefore the rulers of the House of Balban in Bengal, finding no scope for warlike enterprises westward, concentrated their energy and resources in subduing the small Hindu principalities which till then were holding their own against Muslim domination."[2]

A new chapter in the history of Bengal was opened with the accession of Ilyas Shah to the throne of Lakhnawati, under the title Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah in 1342. During his reign the Delhi Sultan Firuz Tughlaq made an invasion of Bengal. Certain areas adjacent to the district of Birbhum feature in the chronicles of the campaign.[3] Although victory was claimed by the Imperialists, the campaign in effect was infructuous. The Bengal Sultan was not dislodged from his throne and the dynasty continued till it was overthrown by Rājā Ganesh (A.D. 1409-10).

After the return of the later Ilyas Shahis to power, we find two inscriptions in Bara (Balanagar) in the district of Birbhum, one dating from the reign of Nāsiruddin Muhammad Shah (A.D. 1450) and another of Ruknuddin Barbak Shah (A.D. 1459) which show that this area was under their rule.[4]

We get evidence that the eastern portion of the district near the Bhagirathi river was subject to Muslim rule during the next era, i.e. the Husain Shahi period. Traces of an old Badshahi road which ran from Lakhnawati to Mangalkoṭ (just across the south-eastern border of the district) and then to Burdwan and Sātgāon are still to be found and near it an Arabic inscription has been found referring to the digging of a well by king Husain Shah in A.D. 1560.[5]

When Sher Shah opened his campaign in A.D. 1536 for the capture of Bengal, it is said that he took a route which was through the present district of Birbhum. J. N. Sarkar has shown

[1] ibid. p. 67.
[2] ibid. p. 68.
[3] An account of this campaign and its effect on the westernmost parts of Bengal appears in West Bengal District Gazetteers: Bankurā. Calcutta, 1968. p. 78-80.
[4] 'Table of Find-spots of Inscriptions in Bengal' in Shamsuddin Ahmed — Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. IV, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 1960.
[5] J. A. S. B., 1861. p. 390, quoted by L.S.S.O 'Malley — op. cit. p. 11.

an interesting sidelight on this question in the following sentences, "No historian has cared to describe the route which the Sher took on this occasion. Ahmad Yadger...merely states that he took a route which no one traversed. Tārikh-i-Daudi, only hints at it by mentioning the jungle. As Qanungo,...has shown, there could be no other unprotected or hilly route than the one Mir Jumla took in 1660, namely, *via* Santal parganahs, Birbhum and Murshidabad, crossing the Ganges perhaps somewhere near Godagari."[1]

At the time of the first Afghan conquest of Bengal we find a reference to another place name in Birbhum once again. In March 1538, when Humayun was pursuing the army of Sher Shah in his bid to capture Gaur, a large contingent of Sher Khan's army with a large number of elephants, horses, etc. under Jalāl Khan regrouped at a place called Sherpur in the modern Birbhum district.[2]

There is also some evidence to show that before and after the time of Sher Shah the district was settled with important Muslim Jagirdars with standing militia to protect the border against the wild tribes of Jharkhand. Blochmann says, "One of the most westerly thānahs in southern Santalia was Sarhat, N. W. of Shiūṛī (Suri) in Bīrbhūm, which is mentioned in Tribenī inscriptions; whilst the settlement of Pathān jāgīrdārs, before and after the time of Sher Shāh, as a standing militia against the inroads of the tribes of Jhāṛk'hand (Chutiā Nāgpur), led to the formation of the great Muhammadan zamīndārī of Bīrbhūm, which gave the E.I. Company some trouble."[3]

Blochmann has also given a description of the layout of this tract of land as it appeared in Ṭodar Mal's rent roll. "In Todar Mall's rent-roll the following Mahalls are mentioned along this portion of the western frontier of Bengal—Āg Mahall (Rājmahall), Kānkjol, Kunwar Partāb, Molesar, in Sirkār Audambar or Tānḍah; Bharkūndah, Akbarshāhī, Kaṭangah, in Sharīfābād (Bīrbhūm); Nāgor, Sainbhūm, Shergaṛh (Rānīganj), Champā nagarī (N. W. of the town of Bardwān), Madāran (Jahānābād and Chandrakonā, west of Huglī), Chittūā (District Medinīpūr), and Mandalghāṭ, at the mouth of the Rūpnārāyan, all belonging to Sirkār Madāran.

[1] J. N. Sarkar — op. cit. p. 162, f.n. 2.
[2] ibid. p. 167.
[3] H. Blochmann — Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal, Part I, J.A.S.B. Vol. XLII, Part I, 1873, pp. 222-3.

"The name of the frontier mahall of Bharkūndah in Bīrbhūm, mentioned above, seems to have been formerly extended to the whole of Bīrbhūm and the Santāl Parganahs. In this extended sense, it is used in the Tārīkh-i-Dāudī on De Barros' map of Bengal, and on Blaev's map of India. In the latter, it is only given as 'Barcunda', but in the former as 'Reino de Barcunda', extending from Ferrandus (a corruption of Bardwān) to Gorij, in which we recognize Gaṛhi, the 'key of Bengal'.[1] O 'Malley adds, "Under Akbar the district as now constituted was divided among three Sarkars, viz., a northern section in Audumbar, a central-eastern section in Sharifabad, and the rest of the district in Mandaran. The Sarkar last named included parganas Birbhum and Nagar, the last of which had a large revenue (4,025,620 *dāms* or Rs. 1,00,640) and evidently had an extensive area. In Sarkar Audumbar one mahal with a considerable revenue was called Mudesar, which is suspected to be a corruption of Mayureswar, a place on the bank of the Mor river with a well-known temple."[2]

Mughal Conquest of Bengal

The empire founded by Sher Shah did not last long and with the death of his son, Islam Shah Sur in A.D. 1553, it began to disintegrate. Bengal was one of the first provinces to break off from the central authority. Muhammad Khan, the Sur viceroy of Bengal at that time, declared his independence. He was succeeded by his son Ghiyāsuddin Bahadur Shah in A.D. 1556. The Sur dynasty in Bengal came to an end in A.D. 1564 when the Karrānis replaced them. Taj Khan was the first Sultan of this line, and was succeeded in A.D. 1565 by his brother Sulaimān Karrāni.

One of the most important events of the reign of Sulaimān Karrāni was the annexation of Orissa. In Orissa, the power and authority of the Gajapati dynasty had started to decline, following the death of Pratāp Rudra Dev. Finally, power was usurped by a minister of the name of Mukunda Dev. In 1565 Mukunda Dev assured emperor Akbar of his allegiance and agreed to send Ibrahim Sur (the rival of Muhammad Shah Adil, who had taken shelter with Mukunda Dev) to invade Bengal in case Sulaimān Karrāni rose up in arms against the imperial authority. However, in A.D. 1567-68, taking advantage of Akbar's preoccupation with the siege of Chitor, Sulaimān Karrāni sent an expedition against Orissa under the command of his son, Bāyazid. The

[1] ibid. p 229.
[2] L. S. S O'Malley - op. cit p. 12

officers of Mukunda Dev rose in rebellion against him at the same time, and were responsible for killing him. Sulaimān Karrāni, however, did not spare the rebellious generals of Orissa either, many of them along with Ibrāhim Sur perished at the hands of the Bengal troops and Orissa passed into the hands of the Sultan of Bengal.

Sulaimān Karrāni was succeeded by his two sons, Bāyazid and Dāud Khan, in quick succession in A.D. 1572. During the reign of Dāud, Mughal-Afghan strife broke out once more, and a strong Mughal detachment under Akbar's general, Munim Khan invaded Bengal in A.D. 1574. Dāud fled to Orissa by way of Satgaon (in Hooghly), using the old Badshahi road that ran through Birbhum.[1] The situation following the flight of Dāud has thus been described by J. N. Sarkar, "Thus in west, north, central and south Bengal no organised Pathan power was left, though as yet no Mughal force or collector was posted in Pabna, Rangpur-Dinajpur, Mymensingh, Bhāwal (north Dacca), Jessore-Khulna or Barisal. Nor in the wilds of Bankura-Birbhum."[2]

Indeed, this tract of land seems to have been under no central authority during the last quarter of the 16th century. After A.D. 1576 (when the forces of Dāud were finally crushed), and even more after A.D. 1579 (when the military commanders of Akbar mutinied in Bengal and Bihar) we find no reference to this district, and it may be presumed that it was lost to Akbar during these times of trouble. At length, in A.D. 1600, its fate was decided by a very important battle fought within the borders of the present district, between the Mughals and the Afghans.

In A.D. 1598-99, Man Singh, the then governor of Bengal, was away in Ajmer. "Seizing this long absence of the veteran viceroy[3]... Usman, Sajawal and other turbulent Pathans who has made a deceptive submission, rose in revolt. On 29th April 1600, they defeated an inferior imperial force led by Maha Singh and his guardian, Pratap Singh Kachwa (a younger son of Rajah Man). The Afghans recovered north Orissa. ... These reverses forced the hand of Man Singh. He hastened east from Allahabad, halted for some weeks at Rohtas to make preparations, and then pushed on to face the rebels. ... Near Sherpur Atia in a single field he routed them with heavy loss (12 February, 1601), pursued them for eight miles and rescued his

1 L. S. S. O 'Malley — op. cit. p. 12.
2 op. cit. p. 189.
3 J. N. Sarkar — op. cit. p. 213.

captive *Bakhshi* from threatened death at their hand." The venue of this battle, Sherpur Atia, is situated in the east of the district.[1]

For some time after the Mughal conquest of Bengal, however, the effective control of the Mughals was confined to very narrow limits, within and around the capital city of Rajmahal, set up by Man Singh.[2] Jadunath Sarkar writes, "From the *Baharistan*, we get a fair idea of the prominent zamindārs who flourished in Bengal at the beginning of Jahāngir's reign. On the west, three noted zamindārs are mentioned whose territories lay adjacent to one another—Bir Hamir, holding sway, in Birbhum and Bānkurā, Shams Khan in Pachet on the south-west, and Salim Khan in Hijli, to the south-east of Pachet. All of them seem to have tendered only nominal submission to Islām Khan."[3] The position of these zamindars was, however, formalised in 1608, when Islām Khan "sent a force of 2000 cavalry and 4000 musketeers, under the command of Shaikh Kamāl, to subdue Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Salim Khan, the zamindārs of Birbhum, Pachet and Hijli respectively. Bir Hamir not only submitted without resistance but led the Mughal commander into the territory of Shams Khan of Pachet, and tried to persuade him to follow suit. Shams Khan, however, fought hard for a fortnight, but was at last forced to submit when the Mughal occupied the skirts of the Darni hill and threatened to storm his fortified post on its top. Next came the turn of Salim Khan, who accepted the imperial vassalage without fighting."[4] Some time after the three zamindars' personal submission, Islām Khan at Ālāipur "dealt with them very leniently, allowed them to hold their own territories as jāgirs, and exempted them from personal service."[5]

Islam Khan was succeeded by his brother Qāsim Khan in A.D. 1613. One of the important events of the latter's rule was "a punitive campaign against Bir Hamir, Shams Khan, Bahādur Khan (who was the nephew and successor of Salim Khan), and Birbhān, the zamindārs of Birbhum, Pachet, Hijli and Chandrakonā... respectively. These vassals who had not rendered personal service but had continued to be loyal in the time of Islām Khan, apparently fell off from their vassalage taking advantage

[1] L. S. S. O 'Malley — loc. cit.
[2] J. N. Sarkar — op. cit. p. 235.
[3] ibid. p. 236.
[4] ibid. p. 249.
[5] ibid. p. 250.

of the weakness and lack of vigilance displayed by the new governor, and it became necessary to force them again into submission. Though the expedition directed against Bir Hamir and Shams Khan was conducted by an experienced officer, Shaikh Kamāl, it was not adequately equipped owing to Qāsim Khan's personal antipathy against the Shaikh, and so it does not appear to have led to any tangible result."[1]

Thus it seems that this area and the jungle terrain of the western border of Bengal continued to enjoy some measure of independence during the time of the Great Mughals. Not much evidence of the history of this area is available till the time of the revolt of Prince Shujā, the son of Shāh Jahān, and the arrival of Mir Jumla in Bengal at the beginning of A.D. 1659. "Mir Jumla arrived at Patna about 22nd February, 8 days after Shujā's departure from that city (to Rājmahal), frustrated Shujā's plan of making a stand at Mungir (19th Feb.—6th March) and at Rāngāmāti (10th-24th March)—first, by making a detour through the Kharagpur hills with the help of Raja Bahroz and occupying Mungir (9th March), and, again outflanking Shujā by another detour through Jharkhand with the assistance of Khwaja Kamāl Afghan, zamindār of Birbhum, and passing through Suri (28th March). Though his army was depleted by the defection of 5000 Rajputs and two Muhammadan generals (end of March) on account of the false rumours of Dārā's victory at Ajmir (Deorāi), Mir Jumla steadily advanced against Shujā, and encamped on the bank of the Ganges at Belghātā, only 30 miles from Shujā's base at Rājmahal. The prince evacuated Rājmahal on 4th April, made Tāndā... his head-quarters and collected the flotilla of Bengal. Mir Jumla immediately occupied Rājmahal (13th April); the entire country on the west bank of the Ganges from Rājmahal to Hughli now passed into the hands of the imperialists."[2] Thus, one may presume that the area consisting of the present district of Birbhum came withtin the fold of the Mughal central authority at this time.

The Badshahi road that runs through the district appears to have become the scene of activities again at the time of the revolt of Shova Singh and Rahim Shah in A.D. 1696, when the rebel army marched from Midnapur to Rajmahal. "Defeated at Bhagwangola, Rahim Shah fled to Burdwan, while the new Viceroy, Prince Azim-us-Shah (successor of Ibrahim Khan, whom the

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1 ibid. pp. 291-92.
2 ibib. p. 339.

emperor. Aurangzeb had recalled owing to his failure to curb the rebels— Ed.), moved slowly over this road from Rajmahal to Burdwan being joined *en route* by the various zamindars and *faujdars*. On the outskirts of Burdwan, he met the forces of Rahim Shah, who was defeated and killed; and with his death the revolt came to an end."[1]

During the rule of the later Mughals, the Pathan zamindars of Birbhum became powerful local chiefs, and appear to have tendered only nominal allegiance to the Subahdars of Bengal. A brief outline of the history of the fortunes of this family of rulers will be given presently, but before that, two notable occurrences after Aurangzeb's death deserve mention. Of the great or old historical zamindars of Bengal that survived upto Murshid Quli's time, two were preserved by him—the contiguous territories of Birbhum (under Āsadullah Khan) and Vishnupur (under the Malla Rājās).[2]

At the time of Shujā-ud-din's rule (Murshid Quli's son-in-law), the zamindar of Birbhum, Badi-uz-Zamān (son of Āsadullah Khan) rose up in rebellion, which was quickly put down. "Badi'-uz-Zamān, the Afghan zamindār of Birbhum, had also to feel the weight of the Nawāb's authority. Emboldened by the natural defences of hillocks and jungles surrounding his territory, the Birbhum zamindār had ceased to send to the Nawāb the revenue of 1,400,000 *bighās* of cultivated lands and rose in insurrection against him in A.D. 1736. Sarfarāz under orders of the Nawāb sent a large army into Birbhum under the command of Mir Sharf-ud-din, the second Paymaster-General, and Khwāja Basant... Alivardi, the *nāib nāzim* of Bihar, also marched from Patna against the zamindār at head of a large force. Badi'-uz-Zamān readily tendered his submission, and accompanied the Bengal troops to Murshidābād to show his respect to Sarfarāz and the Nawāb. Alivardi soon returned to Patna. Through the intercession of Mir Sharf-ud-din, Badi'-uz-Zamān was granted an interview by Shujā-ud-din, who pardoned his offences and permitted him to return to Birbhum on his promising an annual remittance of three lakhs of rupees to the Nawāb, besides the standard revenue due from him and also proper obedience to his orders."[3]

The relatively peaceful life of the area was disturbed in A.D. 1741, when the Maratha invasions began, and the incursions

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[1] L. S. S. O 'Malley — loc. cit.
[2] J. N. Sarkar — op. cit. p. 415.
[3] ibid. pp. 427-28.

continued till the middle forties of the 18th century. From the evidence given in the *Siyar-ul-Mutākharin*,[1] we know that at one time the whole of Birbhum appears to have been held by them with the rest of the country west of the Ganges from Rajmahal on the north to Midnapur on the south, while only Murshidabad and the country east and north of the Ganges remained in the possession of Alivardi Khan. Writing about the Maratha raids in Birbhum and neighbouring areas, W. E. Hunter said—"The Marathas fell with their heaviest weight upon the border principalities of Birbhum and Bishnupur. Tribute, free quarters, forced services, exactions of a hundred sorts, reduced the once powerful frontier houses to poverty: and their tenantry fled from a country in which the peasant had become a mere machine for growing food for the soldier. Burdwan not only lay further inland, but its marshy and river-intersected surface afforded a less tempting field for cavalry, and a better shelter for the people. The Marathas spent their energy in plundering the intervening frontier tracts of Birbhum and Bishnupur, where the dry soil and fine undulating surface afforded precisely the riding-ground which their cavalry loved. There they could harry the villagers exhaustively and in detail by means of small parties."[2]

During the time of the Maratha invasions, the district was held by a line of Afghan zamindars who were practically independent. It would be relevant to trace in brief outline, the history of this family before concluding the history of the district during the medieval period. As has been mentioned earlier, the ruler of Birbhum at the beginning of the century was Āsadulla Khan, whose power and prestige were acknowledged in the *Riāz-us-Salātin* in the following manner, "The zamindars of Birbhum and Bishnupur, being protected by dense forests, mountains and hills, did not personally appear before the Nawab, but deputed instead their agents to carry on transactions on their behalf, and through them used to pay in the usual tributes, presents and gifts. In consideration of the fact that Asad-ulla, zamindar of Birbhum, was a pious and saintly person and had bestowed half of his property as *madad-i-mash* grants on learned, pious and saintly persons, and had fixed daily doles of charity for the poor and the indigent, the Khan refrained from molesting him."[3]

Āsadulla Khan was succeeded by his son, Badi-uz-Zamān Khan.

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[1] Cited in L.S.S.O 'Malley — op. cit. p. 13.
[2] Quoted by L. S. S. O 'Malley — loc. cit.
[3] Quoted by L. S. S. O 'Malley — loc. cit.

whose attempted rebellion against Shujā-ud-din has been mentioned earlier. In spite of the check on his power effected by the Nawāb, his power continued to grow. About him, the *Siyar* had this to say, "Among the zamindars in the kingdom of Bengal none was so near neighbour to the city of Murshidabad its capital, as the Raja of Birbhum, and none so powerful, whether by the number of his troops or by his personal character for bravery. He likewise piqued himself upon a sense of humour and a delicacy of sentiments, qualifications very extraordinary in a zamindār. ... The zamindār, Badi-ul-Zaman Khan, who went by the name of Diwanji, had alaways been in his youth, as he was now even in his riper years, extremely addicted to his ease and to his pleasures; and it was to enjoy himself he had left the management of his dominions to Ali Naki Khan, the most capable of his sons, his whole ambition being to pass his days in quiet and enjoyment. But this hopeful son of his dying in the flower of his age, the father, who was alerady disgusted with the world, and deeply affected by the total ruin that had befallen Ali Vardi Khan's family, to which he was extremely attached, put on a *fakir's* garb and placing at the head of his domininons Asad Zaman Khan, another son of his, . . . he retired again out of the tumult of affairs and seemed pleased with nothing but the conversation of *fakirs*, and with retirement and tranquillity."[1] With the reign of Āsad-ul-Zamān, we pass on to a sequence of events that fall within the history of the modern period.

MODERN PERIOD

The last of the independent Nawābs of Birbhum, Āsad-ul-Zamān got involved with Anglo-French rivalry in Bengal, and got on the wrong side of the British immediately after the Battle of Plassey, thus hastening the process of the dissolution of the Birbhum Rāj. The small band of Frenchmen that had assisted Sirāj-ud-daula in Plassey in A.D. 1757 retreated into Birbhum following the defeat in battle and got refuge there. In December 1757, Āsad-ul-Zamān got news of the English advance towards his territory in pursuit of the French and got alarmed on his own account, because of the protection he had granted to the French party earlier that year. He made a gesture of apprehending them and handing them over to the British force, but the attempt was not entirely successful.[2]

Actual hostilities between the Rājā of Birbhum and the British broke out in A.D. 1760, when the former, along with other im-

[1] Quoted by L.S.S. O'Malley — op. cit. p. 14.
[2] L.S.S. O'Malley — op. cit. p. 15.

portant neighbouring zamindars, sent an invitation to the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam to come to Bengal and then march against the British with the help of his 'loyal subjects'.[1] In April 1760 Shah Alam advanced into the district, closely pursued by the joint forces of Miran (son of Mir Jafar) and Major Caillaud, the commander of the East India Company's troops. Instead of following the original plan of marching through Nagar and Suri towards Murshidabad which was unprotected, the Emperor proceeded towards Burdwan *via* Lakarakund. He found his way blocked by Miran and Caillaud, and retreated, thus giving up the plan of suprising and capturing Murshidabad.[2] The defiance and resistance shown by the Birbhum Rājā against the English and the Nawāb of Bengal quickly broke down after the departure of Shah Alam from Bengal. "At the end of the year (1760), the Emperor having left the Province, the English and the Nawab (of Bengal) preceeded against the Raja of Birbhum, one body advancing under Captain Whyte from Midnapore, while Mir Kaism Ali Khan and his Armenian general Ghurghin Khan marched from Murshidabad with a considerable force, supported by a detachment under Major Yorke. Asad Zaman Khan deputed the government of his territory to his father as Diwan, and taking the field with 5,000 horse and 20,000 foot, entrenched himself in a difficult part of the country near Kherwah. His position being a strong one, Major Yorke directed Captain Whyte to take a circuitous route to the north-west and fall upon the rear of the Birbhum troops, while he engaged their attention in front with his own and the Nawab's troops. This duty Captain Whyte executed with such celerity, that he completely surprised the enemy, who, confident of the strength of their position, never anticipated the possibility of any attack in the rear, and were ignorant of the approach of the British troops until they found them in the centre of their camp. They were seized with panic and thrown into confusion; and the sound of the firing serving as a signal for Captain Yorke, he advanced with his detachment, followed at some distance by Mir Kasim Khan's troops and carried the lines without difficulty. The enemy were completely defeated and fled in all directions after suffering very heavy loss. This victory effectually broke the power of the Birbhum Raja, whose territory, as well as that of Burdwan, was speedily subdued and pacified."[3]

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[1] loc. cit.
[2] loc. cit.
[3] ibid. pp. 15-16.

The early period of British administration in Birbhum was a time of trouble and uncertainty. The affairs of the district were administered from Murshidabad for a period of twenty years after the grant of the Diwāni to the East India Company by the Mughal Emperor in A.D. 1765. In the year 1785, the Collector of Murshidabad complained to the Goverment of the unsettled state of affairs in Birbhum, and asked for a reinforcement of additional troops to enable him to maintain order. Following this appeal, Birbhum along with Vishnupur was formed into a separate district. In 1786 Mr. Foley was sent there as Collector and Magistrate, and in the following year Mr. Sherburne succeeded him. For a time afterwards, the posts of Collector and Magistrate were separated, and they were held by different officers.[1]

The district headquarters were at Suri, and an Assistant, Mr. Hesilrige was posted at Vishnupur. In 1793, Vishnupur was separated from Birbhum and annexed to Burdwan. The Collectorship of Birbhum was abolished in 1809, and the district was again administered from Murshidabad; an Assistant Collector remaining in charge at Suri. This arrangement continued till 1820, when Birbhum was reinstated as a separate district and restored to its former size, with the exception of a few estates which were transferred to the Jungle Mahals. The area of the district diminished considerably again in 1855, when the area known as the Santal Paraganas was separated following the Santal uprising.[2]

The short summary of events regarding the administrative changes in the district needs to be kept in mind as a background to the actual course of events in the history of this area during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century.

In 1770, five years after the grant of the Diwāni, the district was devastated by famine. The severity of this calamity has been extensively described by many historians and other writers, and its impact on the countryside was to be felt for a long time to come. In a report of February 1771, Mr. Higginson, the Supervisor of Birbhum, described the condition of the badly affected eastern parganas of the district in the following manner, "Truly concerned am I to acquaint you that the bad effects of the last famine appear in these places beyond description dreadful. Many hundreds of villages are enetirely depopulated; and

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[1] E. G. Drake-Brockman — Notes on the Early Administration of Birbhum (1898). p. 1.

[2] loc. cit.

even in large towns there are not a fourth part of the houses inhabited. For want of ryots to cultivate the ground, there are immense tracts of a fine open country which remain wholly waste and unimproved." He begged the Council to allow him to suspend the collection of revenue arrears from "the remaining poor ryots, who have so considerably suffered from the late famine, that by far the greatest part of them are rendered utterly incapable of paying them. By obliging them to sell their cattle and utensils for agriculture, a small portion might be recovered; but this would certainly be the means of their deserting the province, and preventing the cultivation for next year, which would be much more fatal to the revenue of the country than the whole loss of the balances."[1] The Council replied, "Though we can by no means recede from the demands for mofussil balances due from your districts, yet we cannot but agree with you in the propriety of suspending them for the present, as continuing to harass the ryots for them at the present season would be attended with prejudice to the ensuing year's cultivation and collection. Should the approaching year, however, prove a prosperous one, we flatter ourselves an adjustment might be made for the recovery of these balances; and it is an object we must recommend to your attention in that event."[2]

The most notable account of the famine of 1770 along with a penetrating analysis of the reasons behind it appears in Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal.* According to Hunter, the calamity affected the history of the country for the next forty years. "In the cold weather of 1769 Bengal was visited by a famine whose ravages two generations failed to repair. English historians, treating of Indian history as a series of struggle about the Company's character enlivened with startling military exploits, have naturally little to say regarding an occurrance which involved neither a battle nor a parliamentary debate. Mill with all his accuracy and minuteness, can spare barely five lines for the subject, and the recent famine Commissioners confess themselves unable to fill in the details. But the disaster which from this distance floats as a faint peak on the horizon of our rule, stands out in the contemporary records in appalling proportions. It forms, indeed, the key to the history of Bengal during the succeeding forty years."[3]

1 Quoted by L. S. S. O'Malley — op. cit. pp. 16-17.
2 ibid. p. 17.
3 W. W. Hunter — The Annals of Rural Bengal, Calcutta, 1965 (reprint), p. 18.

The famine raged in all its intensity from December 1769 to September 1770. It was, thus, a one year famine. This was followed by abundant harvests for the next three years consecutively, and "nature exerted herself to the utmost to repair the damage she had done."[1]

"That she failed to do so, the records of the next thirty years mournfully attest. Plenty had indeed returned, but it had returned to a silent and deserted province. Before the end of May 1770, one-third of the population was officially calculated to have disappeared ... and it was estimated that 'one half of the cultivators and payers of revenue will perish with hunger.' ... Notwithstanding the abundant crops of 1771 the country continued to fall out of tillage; and the Commissioners appointed in 1772 to visit the various districts, found the finest part of the province desolated by famine, the lands abandoned and the revenue falling to decay. Two years after the dearth Warren Hastings wrote an elaborate report on the state of Bengal. He had made a progress through a large portion of the country, instituting the most searching inquiries by the way, and he deliberately states the loss as 'at least one-third of the inhabitants.' This estimate has been accepted by all official and by the most accurate non-official writers. It represents an aggregate of individual suffering which no European nation has been called upon to contemplate within historic times. Twenty years after the famine the remaining population was estimated at from twenty-four to thirty millions; and we cannot help arriving at the conclusion, that the failure of a single crop, following a year of scarcity, had within nine months swept away ten millions of human beings."[2] Hunter, in his account, squarely blamed the policy of grain monopoly of the Company and its inadequate measures to prevent the suffering of the people as the main reasons behind the enormity of the devastation.[3]

The western principalities of Bengal, i.e. Birbhum and Vishnupur, bore the full brunt of the natural calamity. "In 1765, four years before the famine, Beerbhoom had been cultivated by close on six thousand rural communes, each with a hamlet in the centre of its lands. In 1771, three years after the famine, only four thousand five hundred of these little communities survived, the cultivators fled from the open country to

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[1] loc. cit.
[2] ibid. pp. 24-25.
[3] ibid. pp. 25-33.

the cities ; but 'even in large towns', wrote a Beerbhoom official in 1771, 'there is not a fourth part of the houses inhabited'."[1]

When Warren Hastings made an attempt to adjust the land tax in Bengal in 1772-73, the local 'native' officials returned the number of rural communes at a hundred more than the figure of 1771-72. But the fact of steady depopulation could not be concealed for long, and by 1785, nearly fifteen hundred of the six thousand prosperous communes had disappeared and the lands had turned into jungle. "When the British undertook the direct management of the district, nearly twenty years after the famine, they found the jail filled with revenue prisoners, no one of whom had a prospect of regaining his liberty. ... While the country every year became a more total waste, the English Government constantly demanded an increased land-tax ... the villagers were dragooned into paying the land-tax by Mussalman troops, but notwithstanding the utmost severities the receipts seldom amounted to much more than one-half of the demand."[2]

Around 1780, considerable portions of the district had turned into dense jungles, infested with wild and dangerous animals which made life for the inhabitants of the area even more miserable. "The evil seems to have reached its climax about 1786. From this year English supervision, more or less direct, dates in Beerbhoom. The agriculturists were by no means the only class who fled before the tiger and wild elephant. The earliest English records disclose the forest hamlets of the iron-smelters deserted ; the charcoal-burners driven from their occupation by wild beasts ; many factories and market towns abandoned ; the cattle trade, which then formed an important branch of the district's commerce, at a stand ; and the halting-places, where herds used to rest and fodder on their way from the mountains to the plains, written down as waste."[3]

But an even greater problem that the East India Company administrator faced was coping with the band of robbers, whose ranks were swelled by the starving peasantry. The chief English Officer, known as the Collector, combined the functions of Commander-in-Chief and Civil Governor within his jurisdiction. The military side of his duties received undue prominence for the first few years. Throughout 1789, the troops had to come up against the armed incursions of bandits in Birbhum and

[1] ibid. p. 40.
[2] ibid. pp. 40-41.
[3] ibid. p. 43.

Vishnupur. "Mr. Keating's position was a difficult one. He had to guard Bishenpore on the south of the Adji, Beerbhoom on the north, and above all, the passes along the western frontier Beerbhoom as the headquarters of the English power, was of the first importance; but if he called in the troops from Bishenpore, the calamities of this preceding year would be repeated; and if he withdrew the outposts from the western passes, the entire district, north and south, would be at the mercy of the hill-men. He decided that it was better to let the marauders riot for a time on the south of the Adji, then to open up his entire frontier. An express summoned the detachment from Bishenpore by forced marches to the rescue of Beerbhoom; but no sooner had they crossed the river than tidings came that Bishenpore was itself in the hands of 'insurgents assembled in number nearly one thousand'. The rebellion spread into adjoining jurisdictions, and the Collectors on the south bitterly reproached Mr. Keating with having sacrified the peace of many districts for the sake of maintaining intact the outposts along the frontier of his own. The more strictly these passes were guarded, the greater the number of marauders who flocked by a circuitous route into the unprotected country on the south of the Adji. Their outrages passed all bounds; the approaching rains, by suspending military operations, threatened to leave them in possession of Bishenpore for several months; till at last the peasantry, wishing for death rather than life, rose against the oppressors whom they had a year ago welcomed as allies, and the evil began to work its own cure.... In mid-summer 1790 Mr. Keating ordered the senior captain 'to station a military guard with an officer at Bishenpore, whose sole business I propose to be that of receiving all thieves and Dacoits that shall be sent in'.

"Thus ended the first two years of which we possess a complete record of British rule in Beerbhoom.... Some time afterwards, when quiet had been imperiously enforced, Mr. Keating calmly and rather despondently reviewed the result of his labours. 'Beerbhoom', he wrote, 'is surrounded on the south-west and west by the great western jungle, which has long protected from the vigilance of justice numerous gangs of Dacoits, who there take up their refuge and commit their depredations on the neighbouring defenceless ryots. Towns once populous are now deserted, the manufactures are decayed and where commerce flourished, only a few poor and wretched hovels are seen. These pernicious effects are visible along the whole course of the Adji, particularly in the

decay of Elambazaar ... and the almost complete desertion of the once large trading town of Sacaracoonda. When these places on the frontier became from their poverty no longer an object to the Dacoits, their depredations were extended into the heart of the district, and towns have been plundered and people murdered within two *coss* (four miles) of the Collector's house, by banditti amounting to upwards of three hundred men'."[1]

At a time when the cultivable land in the district was falling into jungle and the area was being plundered by insurgents, European commercial enterprise, however, prospered in the area. The East India Company had a monopoly in the silk industry, and the trade was carried on by a Commercial Resident. The first Commercial Resident in Birbhum was John Cheap, and he held this post for forty-one years. "He lived chiefly at Surul, 20 miles from Suri, where his residence consisted of a pile of buildings surrounded by artificial tanks and spacious gardens, encircled by a strong wall, which gave the place a look of a fortress rather than of a private dwelling. Such, in fact, it was, for sepoys were posted at Surul to guard the factory. Here Mr. Cheap held an unofficial court, the villagers referring their disputes to his arbitration. Little parties arrived every morning—one bearing a wild beast, and expecting the reward; another guarding a captured dacoit; a third to request protection against a threatened attack on their village; a fourth to procure the adjustment of some dispute about their water course or land marks. In such matters the law gave Mr. Cheap no power; but in the absence of efficient courts, public opinion had accorded jurisdiction to any influential person who chose to assume it, and the Commercial Resident's decision was speedy, inexpensive and usually just."[2]

The Company's trade was on a large scale, and the mercantile investment in the district towards the close of the 18th century usually varied from 4½ to 6½ lakhs of rupees, annually.[3] The weavers worked upon a system of advances, "every head of a family in a Company's village—having an account at the factory, which he attended once a year for the purpose of seeing his account made up, and the value of the goods which he had delivered from time to time set off against the sums he had received.

[1] ibid. pp. 49-50.
[2] L.S.S. O'Malley—op. cit. p. 21.
[3] loc. cit.

The balance was then struck, a new advance generally given, and the account re-opened for the ensuing year."[1]

Apart from his function as the Company's Commercial Resident in Birbhum, John Cheap was also a great merchant and manufacturer on his own account. He introduced the cultivation of indigo into the district, improved the system of manufacturing sugar by importing machinery from Europe, and set up a mercantile house which continued to function till the end of the nineteenth century.[2] "To Mr. Cheap also the district was indebted for the only good roads it possessed at the beginning of the 19th century, viz., the roads passing from Suri through Surul, to Burdwan; from Surul to Ganutia; and from Surul to Katwa."[3] He died at Ganutia in 1828 and was buried in the old factory grounds there.[4]

The Company also had a Commercial Agent posted in the district. According to Drake-Brockman's account, "The Commercial Agent, Mr. Frushard, whose nationality is entered in the returns as French, had been sent by the Court of Directors in 1782 to be Superintendent of the Company's silk works, but in consequence of a reduction in the investment, his services were dispensed with, and he was permitted to erect a silk filature on his own account at Ganutia. He purchased the buildings there in 1785 from a Mr. Edward Hay for a sum of Rs. 20,000 and was allowed by Government as an indulgence to hold his lands 'as a paikasht raiyat'. After working thus for two years he was taken into the Company's employ as Commercial Agent, and obtained in 1791 a lease of 2,500 bighas of land round his works. This lease was granted him at a rent of Rs. 1,500 a year for 12 years by the Raja of Birbhum at the request of Government. We find Mr. Frushard constantly recieving from the treasury at Suri large sums of money for silk supplied to the Company. His position was not equal to that of Resident. The correspondence between him and the authorities at Suri clearly disclose that less attention was paid to him and his complaints.

"In 1800 Mr. Frushard's lease was increased to Rs. 3,411 a year, in spite of his objections that the rent received by him after many years only amounted to Rs. 2,163, while the works had cost Rs. 60,000 and had been in the Company's use without rent ever

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[1] loc. cit.
[2] ibid. p. 22.
[3] loc. cit.
[4] loc. cit

being paid by it. His commission amounted to Rs. 12,000 a year, which, after paying the interest on his capital, only left his Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000. He fell often in arrears with his rent to the Raja, and the latter put this forward to the Collector as an excuse for himself being in arrears of revenue. Mr. Frushard died in 1807, and the factory was taken over by Mr. Cheap at a rent of Rs. 3,415 from Government, who had purchased the estate at Calcutta for Rs. 15,800 at a sale held for arrears of revenue. On the death of Mr. Cheap in 1828 the estate was put in charge of Mr. Shakespear, who acted as Commercial Resident till 1835, when the manufacture of silk by Government in Birbhum ceased. The estate was taken over afterwards by the Collector and managed as a khas mahal, and has since been bought by the Bengal Silk Company, . . ."[1]

Besides those traders who were employed by the Company, some other Europeans were engaged in trade in the district. The right to work the iron in the district was leased out by the former zamindars, and we get a reference of one Mr. Farquhar holding the *'loha mahal'* at a lease of Rs. 765 a year.[2]

"At Supur near Surul there was a French factory in charge of Messrs. Chaubon and Arrear. These gentlemen had in 1787 been ordered by Mr. Sherbourne not to hoist the French flag, and Mr. Arbuthnot, the Assistant Collector, was deputed to Supur to enforce the taking down of the flag. Later in 1793 when notice of war between England and France had been received, the Magistrate took 'paroles of honour' from these two gentlemen 'not to serve against Britain or undertake any fresh sepculation'. The Magistrate also took possession of 'one ... house in Supur, which was French property'. This 'French factory' was afterwards put under Mr. Cheap's care on behalf of the authorities."[3]

There were also four other Europeans engaged in the manufacture of indigo and sugar in the district. Disputes concerning the growing of indigo were first reported in 1827 at the border with Murshidabad.[4]

The most interesting event in the subsequent history of Birbhum is the Santal rebellion of 1855 which broke out in the Santal

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[1] E. G. Drake-Brockman— op. cit. p 27.
[2] ibid. p. 28.
[3] loc. cit.
[4] loc. cit.

Parganas and spread to this district.[1] At the beginning of July 1855 the Santals moved across the border and sacked Palsa in the north of the district. They, however, fell back when troops advanced from Berhampore (Murshidabad) and defeated them at Maheshpur. On July 20. Mrityunjaypur and Narayanpur to the north-west of Rampurhat had been sacked, and on the 23rd Ganpur and other villages were destroyed. Further south, the Santals overran the country from the Grand Trunk Road in Burdwan, a few miles across the south-western boundary of the district to Sainthia. Suri itself was threatened at the time and Major Jarvis was ordered up with his regiment from Barrackpore. On his arrival in Burdwan, he was directed by the Commissioner to march straight towards Suri which was in instant danger of attack.

On the western border, parties of the official troops were engaged in skirmishes with the Santals at various places. The Santals obtained possession of Nagar and Afzalpur, but after some more fighting were compelled to retreat across the border to Kumarbad.

Towards the end of July, General Lloyd was placed in command of a force against the Santals, and shortly afterwards another officer, Colonel Bird was appointed, with the rank of a Brigadier, in charge of the troops in Birbhum and Bankura. All the available troops were hurried up, and quiet was restored in this part of the country by 17 August. Trouble, however, started again when a proclamation was issued the next month which stated that all but those who had led the rebellion and committed violent acts would be pardoned. By the end of September the Magistrate of Birbhum reported that the Santals had once again risen up in arms, and that the whole country from four miles west of Nagar to Deoghar was in their hands. One large body of Santals were waiting at Tilabuni, six miles west of Suri, where they were waiting for another large group of Santals to join them in order to launch an attack on the district town.

At length, in November 1855 martial law was proclaimed, and a cordon of outposts, consisting of 12 to 14 thousand men, in some cases, pushed back the Santals from the open country. By the end of the cold season of 1855-56 the Santals had tendered their submission.

[1] The following account of the Santal Rebellion has been compiled from *the Annals of Rural Bengal* by W. W. Hunter, pp. 123-36.

After the Santal rebellion, the upland tracts of the west were transferred to the newly created district of Santal Parganas. This was an important outcome of the movement, and reflected the Government's recognition of the separate identity of the Santals. The *parganas*, that were affected by this transfer, were Sarath Deoghar, Pubbia, Kundahit, Karaya, Muhammadabad and part of Darin Mauleswar.

In 1879 another change took place in the district, when Barwan, with an area of 108 square miles was transferred to Murshidabad, and Rampurhat and Nalhati were transferred to the district of Birbhum.[1] The physical limits of the district have remained unchanged since then.

[1] L.S.S O'Malley—op. cit. p. 27.

CHAPTER III

PEOPLE

POPULATION

The total population of the district

In the Census of March 1961 a total of 14,46,158 persons were enumerated as living in the district of Birbhum which covered an area of 1,757 square miles (4,551 square kilometres) according to the Surveyor General of India. The area figures are not available with the Director of Land Records and Surveys as the revisional survey operations and the consequent revision of Jurisdiction Lists have not been finalised. According to the computation made by the Census Directorate, from the latest available Jurisdiction Lists, the total area of the district is 1,743.0 square miles (4,514.4 square kilometres).[1] For arriving at the figures relating to the density of population the later figure has been taken into consideration.

The district population was composed of 7,32,922 males and 7,13,236 females, giving a male-female ratio of 51 : 49. Out of a total of 14,46,158 persons, 13,45,389 persons or 93.04 per cent of district population lived in the rural areas and only 1,00,769 or 6.96 per cent of total district population inhabited the urban areas of the district.

Birbhum district comprises 5.1 per cent of the total area of the State of West Bengal and is inhabited by 4.1 per cent of the total population of the State.

The table in Appendix I gives an idea about the main demographic features of the district according to the Census of 1961.

For administrative convenience the district is divided between two sub-divisions. Suri Sadar Sub-division comprises the areas of Suri, Rajnagar, Mahammad Bazar, Sainthia, Dubrajpur, Khayrasol, Ilambazar, Bolpur, Labhpur and Nanur police stations or thanas. Rampurhat Sub-division comprises the areas of the northern thanas of Mayureswar, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Murarai. The thanas are the units of police administration.

Sadar Sub-division is seemingly the more populous of the two sub-divisions. But as the Sadar Sub-division comprises a much larger area, the pressure of population on land is heavier in Rampurhat Sub-division. The table in Appendix II gives a com-

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[1] The anomaly cannot be easily accounted for and reconciled. It may be attributed to the difference in surveying methods.

N.B. Some figures of the census of 1971 are available at the time of going to press. These are given in an appendix to this Chapter (Table A to F)

parative quantitative description of the two sub-divisions, so far as the area, housing and population are concerned.

The Sadar Sub-division comprises areas within ten thanas and Rampurhat Sub-division comprises areas under the criminal jurisdiction of four thanas as detailed above. The following table gives a quantitative picture of area, houses, and population in different thanas of the district, as it obtained in March 1961.

POLICE STATION-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF AREA, HOUSES & POPULATION : CENSUS 1961

Police Stations/ Towns	Total Rural Urban	Area in sq. mile (sq. km)	No. of villages inhabited (uninhabited)	No. of occupied residential houses	Population		
					Persons	Males	Females
Suri	T	113.1 (229.9)	185 (23)	26,453	1,05,427,	54,321	51,106
	R	109.4 (283.4)	185 (23)	21,707	82,586	41,695	40,891
	U	3.7 (9.5)	—	4,746	22,841	12,626	10,215
Suri (M)	T	3.66 (9.48)	— —	4,746	22,841	12,626	10,215
Rajnagar	T	85.2 (220.7)	84 (14)	12,288	41,973	21,248	20,725
	R	85.2 (220.7)	84 (14)	12,288	41,973	21,248	20,725
Mahammad Bazar	T	121.0 (313.4)	134 (24)	17,742	66,362	33,519	32,843
	R	121.0 (313.4)	134 (24)	17,742	66,362	33,519	32,843
Ilambazar	R	100.2	123 (16)	15,852	68,882	34,645	34,237
Sainthia	T	124.1 (311.1)	220 (13)	24,656	1,04,698	53,647	51,051
	R	118.8 (307.7)	220 (13)	22,452	92,602	47,098	45,504
	U	1.3 (3.4)	— —	2,204	12,096	6,549	5,547

Police Stations/ Towns	Total Rural Urban	Area in sq. mile (sq. km.)	No. of villages inhabited (uninhabited)	No. of occupied residential houses	Population		
					Persons	Males	Females
Sainthia (N.M.)	U	1.30 (3.37)	— —	2,204	12,096	6,549	5,547
Dubrajpur	T	138.8 (359.5)	192 (40)	22,642	97,695	49,359	48,336
	R	135.9 (352.0)	192 (40)	19,637	83,778	42,166	41,612
	U	2.9 (7.5)	— —	3,005	13,917	7,193	6,724
Dubrajpur (N.M.)	U	2.90 (7.51)	— —	3,005	13,917	7,193	6,724
Khayrasol	T	105.6 (273.5)	129 (41)	16,538	77,226	39,127	38,099
	R	105.6 (273.5)	129 (41)	16,538	77,226	39,127	38,099
Bolpur	T	128.8 (333.6)	158 (11)	25,546	1,11,950	57,905	54,045
	R	123.7 (320.5)	158 (11)	21,208	88,595	45,158	43,437
	U	5.1 (13.1)	— —	4,338	23,355	12,747	10,608
Bolpur (M)	U	5.07 (13.13)	—	4,338	23,355	12,747	10,608
Labhpur	T	104.7 (271.2)	160 (19)	19,396	91,610	45,876	45,734
	R	104.7 (271.2)	160 (19)	19,396	91,610	45,876	45,734
Nanur	T	119.4 (309.2)	131 (7)	22,916	98,476	49,483	48,993
	R	119.4 (309.2)	131 (7)	22,916	98,476	49,483	48,993
Mayureswar	T	147.1 (381.0)	233 (12)	34,393	1,28,274	64,576	63,698
	R	147.1 (381.0)	233 (12)	34,393	1,28,274	64,576	63,698

Police Stations/ Towns	Total Rural Urban	Area in sq. mile (sq. km.)	No. of villages inhabited (uninhabited)	No. of occupied residential houses	Population Persons	Males	Females
Rampurhat	T	182.4 (472.4)	203 (9)	37,896	1,74,260	88,542	85,718
	R	180.4	203	34,300	1,54,363	77,678	76,685
	U	2.0 (5.1)	— —	3,596	19,897	10,864	9,033
Rampurhat (M)	U	1.97	—	3,596	19,897	10,864	9,033
Nalhati	T	138.8 (359.5)	140 (6)	33,149	1,40,058	70,441	69,617
	R	136.2 (352.8)	140 (6)	31,502	1,31,395	65,773	65,622
	U	2.6 (6.7)	— —	1,647	8,663	4,668	3,995
Nalhati (N.M.)	U	2.57 (6.66)	— —	1,647	8,663	4,668	3,995
Murarai	T	137.8 (356.9)	142 (9)	32,661	1,39,267	70,233	69,034
	R	137.8 (356.9)	142 (9)	32,661	1,39,267	70,233	69,034

It may be seen from the table given above, that Rampurhat thana was the largest both in respect of area and population and Rajnagar thana the smallest in those two respects. In size of the area Mayureswar, Nalhati (and Dubrajpur), Murarai and Bolpur came after each other, in that order, after Rampurhat. So far as the size of the population was concerned Nalhati, Murarai, Mayureswar and Bolpur, came after each other, in that order, after Rampurhat. The northern thanas, that is the police stations within the jurisdiction of Rampurhat Sub-division, were not only larger in size than their counterparts within Sadar Sub-division but also were generally more populous. It will be seen a little later that the most densely populated police station of the district was Murarai; followed by Nalhati, Rampurhat, Suri, Mayureswar (and also Sainthia) and Bolpur, in that order. Thinly populated thanas included Rajnagar, Mahammad Bazar, Ilambazar, Khayrasol, and Dubrajpur.

The thana-wise pattern of the distribution of population of Rampurhat Sub-division has more or less remained the same

since the beginning of Census operations in 1872. But the pattern of distribution of population in the southern thanas seems to have been subject to good deal of fluctuation. In 1910 O'Malley found Bolpur to be the most thinly populated thana and Suri the second most sparsely populated police station area. In the same context O'Malley remarked that Bolpur thana area had once been quite populous.[1] According to the data provided by 1961 Census, Bolpur is the most populous thana of Sadar Sub-division and Suri is the next most populous thana of the same Sub-division. It is, therefore, worthwhile to sketch the history of fluctuations in population pattern in order to know the factors which have governed such fluctuation in Birbhum district.

The statement given below indicates the fluctuations in the size of population in Birbhum district for each decennial year since 1872.

FLUCTUATIONS IN POPULATION-SIZE SINCE 1872

Total Rural Urban	Year	Population	Decade variation	Decade Percentage variation
Total	1872	8,51,235	—	—
	1881	7,92,031	−59,204	−6.95
	1891	7,98,254	+6,223	+0.78
	1901	9,06,891	+1,06,196 (mean)	+13.31 (mean)
	1911	9,40,162	+33,271	+3.67
	1921	8,51,725	−88,437	−9.41
	1931	9,47,554	+95,829	+11.25
	1941	10,48,317	+1,00,763	+10.63
	1951	10,66,889	+18,572	+31.77
	1961	14,46,158	+3,79,269	+35.55
Rural	1872	8,42,234	—	—
	1881	7,84,183	−58,051	−6.89
	1891	7,90,773	+6,590	+0.84
	1901	8,98,199	+1,04,426	+13.59
	1911	9,31,031	+32,832	+3.66
	1921	8,28,474	−1,02,557	−11.02
	1931	9,26,677	+98,203	+11.85
	1941	9,87,973	+61,296	+6.61

[1] L.S.S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers, Birbhum Calcutta, 1910. p. 30.

Total Rural Urban	Year	Population	Decade variation	Decade Percentage variation
Rural—	1951	9,97,896	+9,923	+1.00
contd.	1961	13,45,389	+3,47,493	+34.82
Urban	1872	9,001	—	—
	1881	7,848	−1,153	−12.81
	1891	7,481	−367	−4.68
	1901	8,692	+1,211	+16.19
	1911	9,131	+439	+5.05
	1921	23,251	+14,120	+154.64
	1931	20,877	−2,374	−10.21
	1941	60,344	+39,467	+189.05
	1951	68,993	+8,649	+14.38
	1961	1,00,769	+31,776	+46.06

The first estimation of the population of the district was made in 1789 by the then Collector, Christopher Keating. According to his estimation* the population was in the order of 8,00,000 for the tract comprising the present district of Birbhum, as well as the part of Murshidabad district to the west of the Bhagirathi, Vishnupur Sub-division of Bankura district and Deoghar Sub-division of Santal Parganas district. In another estimation, made in 1801, the population figure stood at 7,00,000 persons for the tract which comprised Deoghar and a part of Dumka areas of Santal Parganas besides present Birbhum. The Revenue Survey of 1848-52 estimated the population to be of the order of 5,14,597 persons; the district then covered an area of 3,142 square miles, including some portions of Santal Parganas district of Bihar. Thus the district then had an average of 163 persons to a square mile.

As is evident from the figures relating to the fluctuations in population, there was a sharp decline in population of the district between 1872 and 1881. It was due mainly to the ravages of the epidemic called Burdwan Fever which raged between 1872 and 1881. The district also suffered from a famine in 1874. All the thanas of the Sadar Sub-division suffered equally while Rampurhat Sub-division recorded a slight rise of 2.7 per cent over the population of 1872. Though in the next decade the population of the district registered a little upward swing, the

* This was more or less a mere guesswork.

Sadar Sub-division and especially the southern thanas (notably Bolpur and Suklipur thanas) of it actually recorded a 4 per cent decrease in population, as the fever was still plagueing the sub-division. The decrease was, however, counterbalanced by an increase of 10 per cent in Rampurhat Sub-division. But only about one tenth of the total decrease in population of the district from 1872 could be covered by the small increase. After the disappearance of the fever the population of the district rallied round to record an increase of over 13 per cent in the Census of 1901 over the population of 1891. The increase was more marked in the southern thanas of the Sadar Sub-division and in the northernmost thana of the district (Murarai within Rampurhat Sub-division). The Sadar Sub-division recorded a 15% increase while Rampurhat Sub-division registered a 11.7% increase over 1891 population. In 1901 the population of the district was found to exceed the population of the same tract recorded in 1872. There had been some immigration of Santal agricultural labourers, especially into Murarai, Nalhati, Khayrasol and Bolpur thana areas from Santal Parganas, and some immigration of workers from Bihar employed by the Railway. But then these immigrations were more than counterbalanced by emigrations out of the district to places where industrial and white collar employments were available. Thus it seems that the increase was due mainly to natural reasons, viz. more births than deaths.

The next decade, that is 1901-11, recorded an increase of 3.67 per cent over the population of 1901. Immigration was negligible and was more than counterbalanced by emigration. Murarai, Rampurhat and Nalhati thanas, in Rampurhat Sub-division, had attracted Santal immigrants, as in the previous decade. Excepting the areas within the thanas of Suri, Sainthia, Rajnagar, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar, Bolpur, Mahammad Bazar and Khayrasol the population had increased in other thanas; the increase was most evident in Rampurhat Sub-division, which was by 6.7 per cent over 1901. The heavy mortality that the population of these eight thanas in Sadar Sub-division suffered in 1908 was due to the small-pox epidemic that affected the south-western part of the district; epidemic was the cause of loss of population. In fact, while the Sadar Sub-division recorded a 1.59 per cent increase in population over what was in 1901, in 1911 Rampurhat Sub-division showed an increase of 6.73 per cent over what was in 1901.

Some natural events which occurred between 1901 and 1911 also had their effects on the fluctuations in population. The food crop output which had been good till 1905, became short in supply between 1908 and 1909 and there were some scarcity in 1908-09. Prices had registered an increase. This drove many poor landless labourers out of the district. From 1906 to 1908 the district suffered from a wave of fever and cholera epidemics. Emigration due to scarcity and deaths due to fever and cholera epidemics (between 1906 and 1909 deaths exceeded births by 41,000) reduced the growth rate of population in the district.

The next decade, i.e. 1911 to 1921, was actually a decade of depletion in population. Almost every thana area of the district experienced a decrease in population. The Sadar Sub-division suffered from successive floods between 1911 and 1913. The loss the district suffered, from malaria and influenza, is reflected in the nature of rural and urban population fluctuations. While the rural areas which suffered most from these diseases, experienced decrease in population, the urban areas, relatively free from these diseases, recorded a phenomenal growth in population.

From the decade 1921-31 onwards, Sainthia, Ahmadpur and Bolpur being free from these diseases began to grow as centres of export trade in rice on the railway tracks connecting the district with other districts Paddy husking mills began to be established at these places from this decade onwards. The growth of population in the decade 1921-31 more than made up the loss suffered during the previous decade. The immigration of Santal and Kora agricultural labourers and other unskilled labourers from Santal Parganas district, especially into Rampurhat and Nalhati thanas, was a big contributing factor to this growth of population. But the urban areas suffered a slight depletion in population during the decade. The growth was more marked in Sadar Sub-division than in Rampurhat Sub-division.

The overall growth of population between 1931 and 1941 was moderate and the growth that affected the rural areas was more or less in keeping with the overall district rate; the growth of population of the urban areas was, however, spectacular. The growth of population during the decade was even in both the sub-divisions, Sadar registering a 10.6 per cent growth and Rampurhat recording a 11.3 per cent growth over the population of

1931. The growth was most marked in Rampurhat and Nanur thana areas.

The Census of 1951 revealed a small growth of 1.77 per cent of population over 1941. This insignificant rate of population growth was largely due to large number of deaths in the famine of 1943 and epidemics of 1944, as also due to emigration for the two reasons stated above. The resultant effects of the calamities were partially offset at the beginning of 1948 when construction labour began to immigrate into the district to work for the Mayurakshi Project which had just begun. Rural areas suffered most and recorded a still smaller increase. Though the rate of population increase of the urban areas had suddenly fallen off from the rate of growth registered in the previous decade, the rate was, nonetheless, very impressive. The trend of setting up of rice mills in the urban marketing centres which had begun in 1938-39 continued during the decade, attracting traders, middlemen and unskilled labourers into the urban areas of the district. This was evident in the impressive rates of growth of population of Bolpur (14.2%), Sainthia (8.5%) and Suri (4.2%) thanas containing Bolpur, Sainthia and Suri towns. During the decade all thana areas except Nanur, Rajnagar, Labhpur and Mayureswar recorded some increase in population.

Birbhum had never had an economically substantial secondary sector. In Birbhum and in neighbouring Santal Parganas iron ore used to be found and there had been an indigenous iron smelting industry. Enthused by these two facts, some English companies had invested capital for setting up of iron industry from around the year 1777. But each time the endeavour failed and eventually around the year 1900 all efforts to establish iron and steel manufacturing units on modern lines were dropped. Whatever had been the capacity of employment of the industry, between the years 1777 and 1900 it dropped to an absolute zero.

The employment generated by the opening of a coal mine at Arang on the western extremity of Dubrajpur thana in 1901 stood at 6000 per day in 1910 and the employment potentiality of the coal mines stood at 1000 in 1951. Stone quarrying is carried on the western fringes of Rampurhat, Nalhati and Dubrajpur thanas. The increase or decrease in the employment potential of this particular mining sector had been marginal since 1872, to have any impact of growth and decline of population.

Till about 1850s mulberry cocoon rearing, silk yarn spinning and silk textile weaving used to be the economic mainstay of

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large number of people in Ganutia in Labhpur P.S., Baswa, Vishnupur and Maragram in Rampurhat P.S. and Tantipara and Karidhya near Suri town. After 1850s the cocoon rearing, silk spinning and silk textile weaving industries suffered a decline and their employment potentiality, as a consequence, suffered. From around 1900, however, the afore-mentioned industries stabilised at a very low level of economy and its low employment potential remained more or less steady with minor occasional fluctuations, till about 1952-53, the time from when the industries slowly began to look up. But then, the aggregate employment capacity of the industries had never been effective enough to have favourable or adverse effect on fluctuations in population levels. The decline and regeneration of the cotton textile weaving at Bolpur, Surul, Suri, Tantipara, Karidhya, Panchiara, Murarai, Nalhati, Rampurhat, Dubrajpur and Sien had no more than marginal effect on the increase or decrease in district population level. Decrease or increase in the employment potential of the industry had its effect only on the thana population level, if at all. In fact, Birbhum district had never had a demographically significant cottage or handicraft industry, the decline or growth of which had more than marginal effect on the growth or decline of district population.

The opening of the Eastern Railway Loop Line in 1859-60, Ondal-Sainthia Branch line of the Eastern Railway Main Line and Ahmadpur-Katwa Light Railway had significant direct and indirect effects on the growth of population in the district. The important direct result had been the creation of the employment opportunities in the railway itself. The opening of a railway workshop at Rampurhat attracted a sizeable number of immigrants into the district. Grain trading centres began to grow up along the railway tracks. It would not be far wrong to say that the Eastern Railway's Sahibgunj-Loop line had made towns out of the villages like Bolpur, Sainthia and Rampurhat. Ondal-Sainthia Branch line's role in making Suri a town might have been secondary but not insignificant (Suri primarily grew as the headquarters of the district administration). The growth of the infra-structure in the form of railway communication facilitated the growth of Bolpur, Sainthia and Rampurhat as grain trading centres. The new income generated by the export of paddy and rice created new employment opportunities which attracted traders, middlemen of all kinds and unskilled labourers (in the expanding transport and storage sectors of the local

economy) from outside the district. The new income in the hands of the traders and middlemen created job opportunities for the lawyers, teachers, doctors and clerks in course of time.

From about the middle of the twenties of the present century, rice milling industry (paddy husking industry had already been there ; but it was fairly diffused throughout the district and used to be practised as cottage industry, being the secondary occupations of the households) began to grow up in and around the grain trading centres. This industry in its turn began to attract further immigration of unskilled labour. By the early forties of the present century, rice milling industry became the largest employment agency in the secondary sector of the district economy.

But as the funds for investment at the disposal of the actual cultivators never increased and as the level of technology of cultivation never progressed, and as the agriculture remained more or less at the mercy of nature, the volume of exportable surplus of grains remained more or less at a static level with occasional yearly shortfalls due to bad harvest. As the exportable surplus remained more or less static the volume of trade and the volume of milling also, after initial growth, tended to become static, i.e. the rate of growth of trade and rice milling tended to taper off. This is the reason why the urbanization in the district after showing initial promise tended to bog down by inherent limitations.

Birbhum is primarily an agricultural district. In Census of 1951, 8,62,282 persons out of a total of 10,66,889 persons or 80.82 per cent of the total population were found to depend upon agriculture. Every extension of agriculture by bringing in hitherto fallow land had attracted immigration from neighbouring Santal Parganas district as agricultural labourers. Growth of export trade and of agriculture-based industry had also attracted immigrant traders and labourers from time to time. Similarly every failure of crop due to natural calamities had led to emigration out of the district and more deaths than births due to starvation and malnutrition. Asok Mitra in his Census Report of 1951 had rightly commented, "the population in Birbhum has been a weathercock of the district's agricultural production and natural calamities."

The first Revenue Survey of the district was held between 1849 and 1852. The district then comprised an area of 12,78,171 acres or 1,997 square miles of which 8,71,846 acres or 1,362

square miles or 68.2 per cent of land was under cultivation (it is not known whether the figure includes double cropped area or not). Productivity was 889 kg. of paddy per acre on an average. The collector had also reported that the area under cultivation had increased in last twenty years. In 1885 the Imperial Gazetteers of India (Provincial Series) reported that during the preceding quarter of a century the land under cultivation had increased by reclamation of fallow and jungly lands. Paddy was cultivated in 93 per cent of the land under the plough. Productivity seems to have fallen to something between 660 kg. and 889 kg. per acre.

According to the agricultural statistics of the Provincial Government in 1903-04, out of a total district area of 1,752 square miles, 1,197 square miles or 68.56 per cent of the land was under cultivation (141 square miles or 11.75 per cent of it comprised current fallow). While 61.71 per cent of total land of the sub-division in Sadar (Suri) Sub-division was under cultivation (and current fallow), 79.37 per cent of the total land of the sub-division was under cultivation (and current fallow) in Rampurhat Sub-division. Of the cultivated area only 3.08 per cent land comprised the double cropped area. Rice was cultivated in 83.33 per cent of land under cultivation and current fallow lands. 3.25 per cent of land comprised mulberry orchard. On rest of the land. cash crops like sugarcane, oil seeds and flax were grown.

According to L.S.S. O'Malley's Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum of 1910, out of a total area of 11,21,280 acres, 6,50,900 acres, comprised the land under cultivation (23,900 acres or 3 per cent of it were twice cropped) and 4,63,600 acres comprised the current fallow land, i.e. 99.4 per cent of land were under the plough or potentially under the plough. This was really a great advancement.

During the revisional survey and settlement operations of 1924-32, 68.11 per cent of land were actually under plough, 2.12 per cent comprised current fallow and 29.77 per cent of land were uncultivable under the given technology (which included some culturable area other than current fallow land). Rice was grown on 93% of land under plough, sugar on 1.10 per cent, gram on 1.15 per cent and wheat on 1.09 per cent of the land under plough. During the settlement operations it was also found that comparatively more lands were under ploughs in Rampurhat Sub-division than in Suri Sadar Sub-division. Nalhati

Police Station area could boast of the highest percentage of land under the plough (viz. 80%) while in the rocky area of Rajnagar the ratio between total available land and land under plough was the lowest in the district (viz. 48.60 per cent).

During Ishaque's Crop Survey of 1944-45 it was found that out of a total district area of 11,15,520 acres, 8,15,517 acres were under cultivation and 1,04,129 acres constituted current fallow and together they accounted for 82.44 per cent of the total land available in the district. Proportionately more lands were either under cultivation or potentially under cultivation in Rampurhat Sub-division than in Suri Sadar Sub-division.

According to the Director of Agriculture, West Bengal, cultivable land in the district in 1949-50 accounted for 9,69,400 acres, comprising 87% of the total district area (6% of the total area of the district comprised the double cropped area).

When related to the chronologically immediately following Census data regarding fluctuations in district population, these land utilization data assume demographic significance. In this primarily agricultural district there has been a positive correlation and growth or decrease in population (assumption being that every extension had in its wake brought in good crop outturn, after allowances were made for the crop failures).

Till 1950-51, agriculture had not only been the principal but practically been the only significant causative factor in the fluctuations in district population. After India had entered the era of planned development, demographic, economic and social change began to take new directions. Since agriculture had been the economic mainstay of the district and since there were not resources enough within the district for its industrial growth, enhancement of agricultural output got top priority insofar as this district was concerned. A programme of waste land reclamation by afforestation and extension of irrigation facilities came as handy answer to the agriculturists' abject servility to natural vagaries. The extension of irrigation, besides being of help in the reclamation of waste land, also reduced man's dependence on rainfall and increased the proportion of double cropped area to total area under cultivation. In the fifties the emphasis was on the major irrigation and multipurpose projects as a result of which the district got the benefit of the Mayurakshi Reservoir Project. Mayurakshi Project has greatly served its purpose as a major irrigation project and has also helped the district to overcome the perils of major floods. But in the sixties on the basis

of cost-benefit analysis it was found that the big projects were uneconomic and so the interest shifted in favour of medium irrigation projects from small rivers and canals and minor irrigation projects from deep and shallow tube-wells. As a result of these improvements, land utilization in the district in terms of agriculture improved considerably, as will be evident from the following table comparing the data relating to agricultural utilization of land in the district in 1950-51 and 1959-60.

AREA UNDER CROPS

(In Thousand Hectares)

Crops	*1950-51*	*1959-60*
Rice		
(1) Bhadoi or Aus	27.0	42.4
(2) Aman or Winter	282.1	270.5
(3) Boro or Summer	..	0.5
Wheat	5.8	7.8
Maize	1.1	0.9
Gram	9.5	17.9
Other foodgrains	12.9	34.5
Sugarcane	1.9	3.7
Rape & Mustard	0.4	0.7
Til or Sesame	0.3	1.7
Linseed	0.6	1.9
Condiments and spices	0.2	0.2
Jute	0.2	0.3
Other Fibres	0.8	0.9
Gross area under various crops	351.2	388.5

But a mere 10.62 per cent increase in agricultural utilization of land cannot justify a 35.55 per cent increase in district population or a 34.82 per cent increase in district rural population,

unless the agricultural productivity increased at a higher rate. Due to the investments made in enhancing irrigational facilities the agricultural productivity increased appreciably between 1950-51 and 1960-61. But agricultural productivity in Birbhum made a break-through only from 1965-66, with the introduction of high yielding variety of seeds.

Another factor in the growth of population between 1951 and 1961 had been the 46.06 per cent growth of urban population of the district. Since this growth was not an effect of industrial growth, the population increase of the urban areas was primarily due to the growth of tertiary sector. More white collar employments were created in government agencies and more teachers and students came to stay in the urban areas of the district. But a large part of urban population in this primarily agricultural district, though derived their incomes from the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, ultimately were sustained by agriculture. Those who worked in rice and sugar mills, those who worked in transport, storage and communication sectors of the economy and even the lawyers and teachers in urban areas ultimately depended upon the agriculture.

Between 1951 and 1961 the district suffered no great natural calamity except a flood in 1956 and due to the public health measures, including the measures for the eradication of malaria, undertaken by the public health authorities and due to the relatively better availability of medical aid, the death rate between 1951 and 1961 fell off sharply. Rate of death at child birth and rate of death at birth also fell off appreciably. All these factors also boosted up the rate of live births. Together, these factors resulted in a sharp increase in population. The 1961 Census registered an overall increase of 35.5% over the population of 1951. Both the sub-divisions had registered an almost equal rate of growth, though the rate of growth differed considerably from police station to police station depending on their topographical peculiarities, irrigation and transport facilities and general state of agriulture etc. The table following will show variations in populations of different territorial units of the district between 1951 and 1961.

ABSOLUTE & PERCENTAGE VARIATION OF POPULATION IN DIFFERENT TERRITORIAL UNITS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1951—1961

District/Sub-division/ Police Station	Population 1961		Variation 1951-61		Percentage 1951-61	Population 1951
Birbhum District	14,46,158	+	3,76,269	+	35.5	10,66,889
Sadar Sub-division	8,64,299	+	2,26,140	+	35.4	6,38,159
Suri	1,05,427	+	24,604	+	30.4	80,823
Rajnagar	41,973	+	8,447	+	25.2	33,526
Mahammad Bazar	6,61,362	+	12,970	+	24.3	53,392
Sainthia	1,04,698	+	33,925	+	47.9	70,773
Dubrajpur	97,695	+	21,649	+	28.2	76,226
Khayrasol	77,226	+	15,673	+	25.5	61,553
Ilambazar	68,882	+	20,593	+	42.6	48,289
Bolpur	1,11,950	+	34,510	+	44.6	77,440
Labhpur	91,610	+	24,832	+	37.2	66,778
Nanur	98,476	+	29,117	+	42.0	69,359
Rampurhat Sub-division	5,81,859	+	1,53,129	+	35.7	4,28,730
Mayureswar	1,28,274	+	36,439	+	39.7	91,835
Rampurhat	1,74,260	+	42,951	+	32.7	1,31,309
Nalhati	1,40,058	+	37,942	+	37.2	1,02,116
Murarai	1,39,267	+	35,797	+	34.6	1,03,470

Vital statistics Migration

From a study of vital statistics regarding the district population it is observed that from 1921 onwards the death rate had been steadily falling off. But the most spectacular decline in death rate came off in the decade between 1951 and 1961. This decline was largely due to improved public health facilities including the success of the National Malaria Eradication Programme, reduction in number of deaths at child birth due to the greater availability of medical care during delivery and lesser number of deaths during natural calamities due to the improvements in communication facilities etc.

While available administrative measures are more or less adequate insofar as recording of deaths in West Bengal plains are concerned (excepting in the very inaccessible regions and in tribal pockets removed from Bengali Hindu and Muslim peasant communities or urban centres), the available administrative machinery to record births are quite inadequate. The inadequacy of birth recording machinery is all the more felt in rural-agricultural districts like Birbhum. After accounting for the migrants it was seen that the births registered between 1951 and 1961 fall short by 12.6 per cent to account for the growth of population between 1951 and 1961. Yet, for whatever it is worth, the births registrar showed that the birth rate was falling off between 1921

and 1951. But between 1951 and 1961 it showed a definite upward swing.

In the decade between 1921 and 1931 the birth rate was 9.3 per cent higher than the death rate ; in the next decade the gap came down to 7.6 per cent and in 1941-51 decade the birth and the death rate actually stood at par. So, the increase in population of the district between 1941 and 1951 was not due to natural reasons but due to migration. But in the decade between 1951 and 1961 when the decennial death rate came down to 11.0 per cent and the birth rate rose up to 28.8 per cent, the decennial rate of natural growth stood at 17.8 over the population of 1951.

The table following gives an indication of birth and death rates in Birbhum between 1921 and 1961, vis-a-vis the rate of natural growth of population in the same period.

	1951-60	*1941-50*	*1931-40*	*1921-30*
Geometric mean of population of decade	12,46,924	10,57,577	9,97,086	8,98,790
Inter-Census population growth rate	+ 30.4	+ 1.8	+ 10.1	+ 10.7
Inter-Census birth rate (Registered only)	28.8	26.3	34.6	36.4
Inter-Census death rate (Registered only)	11.0	26.3	27.0	27.1
Inter-Census rate of natural increase (Registered only)	+ 17.8	+ 0.1	+ 7.6	+ 9.2
Migration-cum-registration error rate	+ 12.6	+ 1.7	+ 2.5	+ 1.4

Migration

According to 1961 Census, 1,31,781 persons enumerated in the district of Birbhum were born outside the bounds of the district and formed 9.1 per cent of the total district population. Birbhum thus is one of the six districts of the state having less than 10 per cent immigrant content in population (other districts being Midnapur, Bankura, Purulia, Murshidabad and Malda).

Persons born in other districts of West Bengal and enumerated in the district numbered 63,789 and constituted 4.4 per cent of the total district population and 48.4 per cent of the total migrant population in the district. A large majority of those who came from other districts of West Bengal came from the neighbouring districts of Murshidabad and Burdwan. Murshidabad alone sent 24,853 and Burdwan 23,531 persons.

Persons born in other states of India and enumerated in the district, numbered 40,725 and accounted for 2.8 per cent of the total population of the district and 30.8 per cent of the total migrant population of the district. Of these, the immigrants from Bihar alone numbered 36,727 and accounted for 90.1 per cent of immigrants of this category. A large number of these migrants are Santals and other Adivasis from the neighbouring Santal Parganas district of Bihar. But the exact proportion of Santal and Hindi/Bhojpuri/Maithili and Urdu speaking migrants from Bihar cannot be known, since there is a large number of Santals of local origin in Birbhum and since Hindi/Bhojpuri/Maithili and Urdu speaking populace in the district includes migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh too.

Persons born in countries other than India and enumerated in this district numbered 27,265 and accounted for 1.9 per cent of the total district population and 20.7 per cent of the total immigrant population of the district. Of these only 106 were non-Indian nationals and rest were naturalized Indians. The preponderance of naturalized Indians in this category is explained by the recent political history of the country. A great majority of the immigrants of this category were born in Bangladesh. The immigrants from Bangladesh numbered 22,239 and accounted for 81.5 per cent of the total migrants of this category, 16.9 per cent of the total migrants of all categories and 0.9 per cent of the total district population. Though some of those who were born in those parts of undivided India which later became parts of Pakistan, were in this district or somewhere in West Bengal or India from before the partition of the country, a large majority of them came into the district as a direct consequence of the partition of the

country. Undoubtedly, the largest majority of those who were born in parts of undivided India, which became parts of Pakistan after the partition, were Hindus from Bangladesh. People born in Nepal and enumerated in the district numbered 1,165 persons and accounted for 0.8 per cent of the total immigrant population of all categories.

The following table based on the Census of 1961 gives an idea about the volume of immigration into the district from various sources.

IMMIGRANTS IN BIRBHUM, CENSUS 1961

	Persons	*Percentage of immigrant population*	*Males*	*Females*
Total number of immigrants	1,31,781	9.1 (of total district population)	52,650	79,131
Born in other district of West Bengal	63,789	48.4	20,075	43,714
(Murshidabad district)	24,853	1.8		
(Burdwan district)	23,531	1.7		
Born in other States of India	40,725	30.8	16,993	23,734
(Bihar)	36,727	27.8	14,268	22,459
Born in countries other than India	27,265	20.7	15,582	11,683
(Bangladesh)	22,238	16.9	12,924	9,314
(Nepal)	1,165	0.8	1,113	52
(Non-Indian nationals)	106	0.08	75	31

It is evident from this presented statement that females outnumber men as immigrants into the district. The number of female immigrants from the neighbouring districts to Birbhum is double the number of male immigrants. The preponderance of female immigrants over males from Bihar is also very clear from the date presented as above. The inevitable conclusion is that more women come into the district as brides than go away from the district as brides (Bengali and Bihari Hindus and Muslims, as well as the Santals have the system of patrilocal residence). That this migration has very little to do with employment or gainful economic pursuit is proved by the fact that males in these categories of immigration number only about half of the female immigration. This sort of migration can be called the nuptial migration. This incidentally leads us to another socially significant fact. Birbhum forms the bridge between the cultural entity known as north Rāḍha and the cultural entity known as south Rāḍha. Hindus and Muslims belonging to ritually similarly placed status groups of Birbhum contact marriages both in Murshidabad (in northern Radha) and in Burdwan (in southern Radha) with whom they have several points of cultural affinity. Similarly, the Santals of Santal Parganas district in Bihar and of Birbhum consider themselves as belonging to the same cultural-geographic community and establish marital relations.

Only in the case of immigrants from countries other than India do the males preponderate over the females. In the case of migrants from Pakistan the male preponderance is a little above what is normal male female ratio available in the district. The reason for this little disparity cannot easily be posited. Insofar as the immigrants from Nepal are concerned, it can be said that the migration is mainly economic in character. The immigrants come into the district to earn a living, leaving their family members at their place of origin, maintain a close communication with their place of origin and go back to their native place after a certain period of time.

Insofar as persons born in other states of India and persons born in the neighbouring districts within West Bengal, in Birbhum are concerned, their distribution pattern as between rural and urban areas of the district is significant. Out of a total of 1,04,514 persons born in other districts of West Bengal and in other states of India (found in the district), 92,247 persons or 88.3 per cent of the migrants were found in the rural areas.

84 per cent of the males and 90.5 per cent of the females who had immigrated from other districts of West Bengal and other states of India were found in the rural areas of Birbhum district. It can be presumed that the largest number of male immigrants joined the work force in the agriculture sector of the district economy and the majority of female immigrants became housewives of the native-born males. The pattern of distribution between urban and rural areas of the persons born in countries other than India, found in the district, is more or less the same. Of 27,265 persons of foreign origin found in the district in 1961, a total of 18,162 persons or 66.6 per cent of the immigrants of this category were found in the rural areas and 9,103 or 33.4 per cent were found in the urban areas.

During the 1961 Census, 2,71,868 persons born in the district were found to reside at places within the district other than the places where they were born. Out of this total 13,695 persons of rural origin were found in urban areas of the district. Of the total living persons found in 1961 in the district, 2,64,989 of the rural-born of the district were found in places other than the places of their birth within the district; so it can be said about 2.5 per cent of those rural born who had moved elsewhere to live within the district, had moved to urban areas and this is a negligible rural to urban migration. On the other hand, out of a total of 5,907 urban-borns of the district found elsewhere in the district, 2,922 or 49.4 per cent were found in the rural areas. Of course, a large number of these persons were not actually of urban origin, though born in the maternity hospitals of the urban areas.

The immigration from other districts of the State of West Bengal had been more than counterbalanced by emigration of the native-borns to their districts of West Bengal. Nearly 30,000 persons born in Birbhum district were found in neighbouring Burdwan district in 1961. In Murshidabad there were 21,471 persons born in Birbhum. 10,459 Birbhum-born were found to reside in Calcutta in 1961 and 11,312 were in 24-Parganas district. The effect of migration had possibly little bearing on the growth of population in the district as immigration and emigration tended to set off each other's effect.

Sex ratio

Since 1901, the sex ratio has always tilted in favour of the males in West Bengal. In 1961 there were 878 women per 1,000 men. In Birbhum district, however, till 1931 females held the balance in their favour. From 1901 onwards male employ-

ment seekers began to flock to relatively more industrialised West Bengal from neighbouring provinces and that caused the parity of sex ratio to be tilted heavily on the side of the males. Birbhum, being one of the least industrialised districts of West Bengal, has not attracted any such male-predominant immigration. Moreover, a great many native males of Birbhum were leaving their home district in search of employment in industrially developed district, leaving their women-folk and children at home. This tended to cause imbalance in the parity of sex ratio in Birbhum in favour of the females.

In 1941, however, it was found that the sex ratio in Birbhum stood at near parity. In 1951 it tended to conform to the general trend of the State of West Bengal. In 1961 there were 973 females per 1,000 males in Birbhum. Though the ratio of sexes in Birbhum is much more balanced than in the State of West Bengal as a whole, yet, since 1951 the sex ratio available in the district tends to conform to the general trend of sex ratio in West Bengal. Birbhum, however, still remains a predominantly rural-agricultural district and one of the least industrialised districts of West Bengal. Change in the trend in sex ratio may therefore be ascribed to the fact that as agriculture in the district is becoming more profitable, those of the male folks who would otherwise have left their native district in search of employment, now stay within the district. Secondly, though industry has not grown in Birbhum at a rate comparable with the rate of growth of industries in West Bengal, in the twenty-year period between 1941 and 1961 there had been some industrial growth in Birbhum too, especially in the sector of agro-industries. Thirdly, there had been a great deal of growth in the transport storage and communication sectors of the district economy as a result of the growth of trade and commerce in agricultural products and these have, besides providing employment to native-born males, attracted male-immigration from outside the district. All these factors have contributed to the change, in the trend, in favour of male imbalance.

Below is a table on generation* variation in sex ratio in Birbhum and in West Bengal as a whole between 1901 and 1961.

* A generation is usually taken as 25 years. Since census are taken at 10 year intervals, a 30 year period has been taken for comparison.

GENERATION VARIATION IN SEX-RATIO IN BIRBHUM & WEST BENGAL : CENSUS 1961

No. of females per 1,000 males

	Birbhum			West Bengal		
Year	*Total*	*Rural*	*Urban*	*Total*	*Rural*	*Urban*
1901	1,029	1,031	848	945	994	652
1931	1,005	1,010	798	890	961	578
1961	973	984	844	878	943	701

Total rural urban difference in sex ratio available in the district, if not as marked as in the case of the State of West Bengal as a whole is nonetheless significant. It points to a selective migration of the male population from rural areas to urban areas in search of education and employment. But then the rural urban difference in sex ratio available in Birbhum is not so great as it is in the case of West Bengal as a whole. The reason for this is not far to seek ; unlike the towns in Calcutta-Howrah-Hooghly and Asansol-Durgapur connurbation regions, Birbhum town is predominantly rural in character. This observation is also confirmed by the fact that the fluctuation in sex-ratio observed in the rural areas of Birbhum cannot be observed insofar as the sex ratio of the urban areas is concerned ; the sex ratio available in urban areas of Birbhum has more or less remained steady over a period of sixty years.

Density

Birbhum district comprises a part of the low population density region of Rāḍha country in West Bengal. As against the state average of 1,021 persons to one square mile area, in Birbhum district, in 1961, on an average 830 persons were found occupying an area of one square mile.

The rural areas of the district had an average density of 780 persons per square mile as against the rural density of 787 persons per sq. mile for the whole of the State of West Bengal in 1961. As against the urban density of 12,978 persons to a square mile on an average in the State of West Bengal, the urban density in Birbhum was 5,768 persons per square mile in 1961.

The table following, gives an idea of generation variation in density of population in the district, as also in its urban and rural parts separately.

GENERATION VARIATION OF DENSITY OF POPULATION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : CENSUS 1961

Average number of persons per sq. mile

Year	*Total*	*Rural*	*Urban*
1901	520	521	494
1931	544	537	1,186
1961	830	780	5,768

It is interesting to note that the pressure of population in rural areas of the district was subject to only very slight variation till 1951. In the decade between 1951 and 1961 the rural density suddenly rose from 578 persons to a square mile to 780 persons per square mile. Till 1911 the urban density was below rural density, or in other words, urbanization had yet to begin. Between 1911 and 1921 the pressure of population on urban tracts increased by two and a half times and urban density in 1921 was three times the rural density. From 1921 to 1931 the density in urban areas increased at a slow rate. But while in 1931 the urban density of population stood at 1,186 persons per square mile in 1941, there were 3,429 persons to a square mile of urban area in Birbhum. Again in the decade between 1941 and 1951 the urban population pressure grew at a slower pace. But the growth in the density of urban population between 1951 and 1961 was phenomenal. From 3,920 persons per square mile in 1951 the density of population in the urban areas of Birbhum grew to 5,768 persons per square mile. The growth of density in rural areas between 1951 and 1961 is ascribable to the fact that the Mayurakshi Irrigation Project turned a vast quantity of hitherto unarable land into cultivable land able to support a greater number of people than it could previously. Similarly, the phenomenal increase of density in urban areas in the decade between 1951 and 1961 is ascribable to the growth of white collar jobs in the district headquarters at Suri (as a result of expansion of governmental functions after the independence and of establishment of the headquarters of the Mayurakshi Project there) and at the Sub-divisional town of Rampurhat, growth of trade and commerce in agricultural produce centering round Bolpur, Suri, Sainthia and Rampurhat and growth of Visva-Bharati University on the outskirts of Bolpur.

The following table gives an indication of the generation variation in density of population in different sub-divisions and police station areas in Birbhum district.

GENERATION VARIATION IN DENSITY OF POPULATION IN DIFFERENT SUB-DIVISIONS & POLICE STATION AREAS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT : CENSUS 1961

	Number of persons per sq. mile on an average		
	1901	1931	1961
BIRBHUM DISTRICT	520	544	830
Sadar Sub-division	475	498	760
Suri P.S.	611	604	932
Rajnagar P.S.	354	359	493
Mahammad Bazar P.S.	261	382	548
Sainthia P.S.	430	503	872
Dubrajpur P.S.	505	497	704
Khayrasol P.S	450	520	731
Ilambazar P.S.	408	478	687
Bolpur P.S.	413	483	869
Labhpur P.S.	614	595	875
Nanur P.S.	688	539	825
Rampurhat Sub-division	605	629	960
Mayureswar P.S	638	564	872
Rampurhat P.S.	564	622	955
Nalhati P.S.	602	662	1,009
Murarai P.S.	625	675	1,011

It will be seen from the table above that since 1901 Rampurhat Sub-division had always been more densely populated than Suri Sadar Sub-division. The sub-division comprises alluvial plains washed by the Mayurakshi, the Dwaraka, the Brahmani, the Banslai and the rivulets like the Chilla, the Kandur, the Gambhira, the Tripita and the Surbusal. Agriculturally the sub-division is very rich. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sub-division will have a high density of population. All the four

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39 — 43·9%
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MAHAMMADBAZAR
MAYURESWAR
RAJNAGAR
SURI
SAINTHIA
KHAYRASOL
DUBRAJPUR
LABHPUR
AJOY RIVER
BOLPUR
NANUR
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N
SCALE
REFERENCE
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
THANA BOUNDARY
RIVER
PREPARED BY
DILIP K KHAN

police station areas of the sub-division always had higher density of population than the district average since 1901. In 1901 Nanur police station area in Sadar Sub-division was, however, the most densely populated police station area in the district. But since 1931 this distinction has remained with Murarai police station area in Rampurhat Sub-division. In 1901 Rampurhat and Nalhati police stations and in 1931 and 1961 Mayureswar and Nalhati police stations recorded densities below the average of the sub-division. Incidentally, the density of population in Mayureswar police station has not increased apace with other thanas of the sub-division.

Since 1901, the average density of Suri Sadar Sub-division had always been below the district average. Areas within the police stations of Rajnagar, Mahammad Bazar, Dubrajpur, Khayrasol and Ilambazar had since 1901 recorded densities not only below the district but also below the sub-divisional average. All these police stations situated on the western part of the district have undulating lateritic soil of extremely low fertility; that perhaps is the reason of low density of population in these thanas. Till 1951 the density of population in Bolpur thana area was also below the average density of population in the district and of Suri Sadar Sub-division. But in 1961 it became the seventh most densely populated police station in the district and the average number of persons living in per one square mile area in this thana is more than the number of persons living in per square mile area in the district. This increase had transport, partly to the growth of Visva-Bharati University and partly been due to the enhancement of agricultural production due to the expanded availability of irrigation facilities after the completion of the Mayurakshi Project. Sainthia thana area which had till 1951 a very low population density, gained in density due to the growth of Sainthia town as a centre of trade, commerce and communication. In Nanur police station area which was one of the most densely populated thanas of the district, this decline had been due mainly to the lack of irrigation and communication facilities. Suri police station area is the most densely populated thana in the district and it had been so since 1931. This thana comprises the administrative headquarters town of the district.

LANGUAGES

The principal languages spoken in the district are those who speak Bengali, Santali, Hindi and Urdu. While Bengali is the

native language of the district, and of the State, Santali — a spoken language of the Santals is also autochthonous, closely situated as the district is to the Santal Parganas district of Bihar. Hindi has been the language of tradesmen and immigrants, as in other districts. Urdu, spoken by the Muslims, has also its share to contribute to the linguistic panorama of the district.

Bengali, among all other languages, is spoken by the largest number of persons in the district. According to the Census of 1961, Bengali speakers numbered 13,08,060 (6,61,146 males and 6,46,914 females) accounting for 90.4 per cent of the district population. Santali speakers, numbering 99,981 (49,950 males and 50,231 females) came next, forming 6.9 per cent of the district population. Hindi speakers, numbering 18,809 (11,128 males and 7,681 females) and forming 1.3 per cent of the district population held the third place, followed by Urdu speakers, numbering 11,750 (6,403 males and 5,347 females), forming 0.8 per cent of the district population.

Of the numerous other mother tongues spoken in the district, the Census of 1961 enumerated 128 Assamese speakers, 181 Gurmukhi speakers, 162 Marathi speakers, 652 Marwari speakers, 390 Nepali speakers and 581 Oriya speakers, all belonging to the Indo-Aryan group, to be living in the district. The said Census also enumerated there 33 Kannada speakers, 5 Malayalam speakers, 16 Tamil speakers, 35 Telugu speakers and 246 Oraon (a tribal dialect) speakers, all belonging to the Dravidian group. There were also 1,068 Dhangri (Oraon ?) speakers there. Of the Austric Group the Census enumerated, apart from the Santali speakers already stated, 1,687 Kora speakers, 102 Kol speakers, 12 Turi speakers, 5 Lodha (Kharia) speakers, 53 Mundari speakers, though it might be that some of these speakers returned ethnic identity in place of linguistic identity. Of the Tibeto-Burman language group, the Census enumerated 11 Dhimal speakers, 19 Manipuri speakers and 2 Tibetan speakers. Besides the speakers of the Indian languages, there were speakers of foreign tongues in the district. Of the foreign language speakers, there were 15, 7, 10 and 10 speakers of Afghani, Arabic, Ceylonese and Chinese respectively, and 3 and 4 speakers respectively of Italian and English.

The following table would indicate the percentage of persons in relation to the district population speaking Bengali, Santali, Hindi and Urdu, the four major languages of the district, in the rural and urban areas of the district.

RURAL-URBAN DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS IN PER CENT FIGURES IN RELATION TO THE DISTRICT POPULATION SPEAKING FOUR MAJOR LANGUAGES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961

	Bengali		*Santali*		*Hindi*		*Urdu*	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Birbhum District	84.6	5.9	6.8	—	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.2
Sadar Sub-division	48.9	4.3	4.8	—	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2
Suri P.S.	5.0	1.5	0.5	—	—	—	—	—
Rajnagar P.S.	2.4	—	0.4	—	—	—	—	—
Mahammad Bazar P.S.	3.6	—	0.9	—	—	—	—	—
Sainthia P.S.	5.6	0.6	0.7	—	—	0.1	—	—
Dubrajpur P.S.	5.4	0.8	0.2	—	—	—	0.1	—
Khayrasol P.S.	5.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ilambazar P.S.	4.2	—	0.4	—	—	—	—	—
Bolpur P.S.	4.7	1.3	1.1	—	—	0.2	—	—
Labhpur P.S.	6.9	—	0.2	—	—	—	—	—
Nanur P.S.	6.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rampurhat Sub-division	35.7	1.5	2.0	—	0.3	0.3	—	—
Rampurhat P.S.	9.7	0.9	0.8	—	—	0.2	—	—
Nalhati P.S.	8.7	0.5	0.3	—	—	—	—	—
Mayureswar P.S.	8.3	—	0.5	—	—	—	—	—
Murarai P.S.	9.0	—	0.3	—	—	0.1	—	—

While for obvious reasons Bengali speakers appear to be distributed both in the rural and the urban areas of the district in the foregoing table. the Santali speakers are seen only in rural areas. The Hindi speakers, however, small their numbers may be, are to be mostly found in the trading centres of the urban areas of some police stations. The Urdu speakers are to be found in the rural areas of some police stations.

The following table would reveal the number of speakers of the four major languages in percentage figures in each administrative unit including police stations of the district.

PERCENTAGE FIGURES OF SPEAKERS OF MAJOR LANGUAGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961

	Bengali	*Santali*	*Hindi*	*Urdu*
District	90.4	6.9	1.3	0.8
Sadar Sub-division	88.9	8.0	1.1	1.0
Suri P.S.	89.8	7.4	1.1	1.1
Rajnagar P.S.	81.7	13.6	0.3	3.7
Mahammad Bazar P.S.	77.5	19.3	0.8	0.4
Sainthia P.S.	85.8	10.1	3.1	0.1
Dubrajpur P.S.	92.1	3.7	0.4	3.4
Khayrasol P.S.	96.7	1.4	0.2	1.7
Ilambazar P.S.	89.0	9.2	0.3	0.4
Bolpur P.S	78.7	14.9	—	0.5
Labhpur P.S.	96.1	3.5	0.1	—
Nanur P.S.	98.0	1.6	0.2	0.1
Rampurhat Sub-division	92.6	5.2	1.5	0.4
Rampurhat P.S.	83.3	7.5	2.9	0.5
Mayureswar P.S.	93.8	5.5	0.5	—
Nalhati P.S.	95.4	3.4	0.8	—
Murarai P.S.	93.6	3.6	1.4	1.2

The foregoing table would reveal that the number of speakers of Bengali in the urban police stations like Suri, Bolpur, Rampurhat is lesser than in other rural police stations because of the influx of speakers of other linguistic groups in the urban police stations. Curiously enough, the number of Bengali speakers is lowest in comparison to other police stations in Mahammad Bazar P.S. where Santali speakers are second in numerical importance. Although Santali speakers are to be found in all

the police stations, they appear most numerous in Mahammad Bazar, Bolpur, Rajnagar and Sainthia police stations. While the largest number of Hindi speakers among themselves is to be found in Sainthia police station, the number of Urdu speakers among themselves is the largest in Rajnagar police station.

It will be of interest to look into the variations in the population strengths of the different language groups in the district during the last sixty years beginning from 1901. Bengali speakers numbering 8,25,036 constituted 91.45% in 1901 in the district; while Santali speakers numbering 47,455 constituted 5.26%, Hindi speakers (including Urdu, several Bihari-dialect speakers) numbering 23,043 constituted 2.55% respectively. The following table shows the variation of populations belonging to Bengali, Santali and Hindi language groups over the said sixty-year period in the district.

VARIATION OF SPEAKERS IN THREE LANGUAGE GROUPS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT 1901-1961

	1901	*1931*	*1961*
Bengali			
Total population	8,25,036	8,51,740	13,01,064
Percentage variation	--	+ 3.23	+ 52.75
Percentage of the district population	91.45	89.89	90.45
Santali			
Total population	47,455	63,797	1,00,110
Percentage variation	-	+ 34.32	+ 56.91
Percentage of the district population	5.26	6.73	6.92
Hindi			
Total population	23,043	13,616	18,809
Percentage variation	—	- 40.89	+ 38.13
Percentage of the district population	2.55	1.44	1.30

The foregoing table reveals that the number of Bengali speakers was almost steady in the first thirty-year period (1901-31), while it increased by 52.75 per cent during the next thirty-year period (1931-61). The latter change may be due to the influx of refugees in the wake of the partition of Bengal, normal increase and better

recording. Santali speakers have shown considerable increase by 34.32 per cent in the first thirty-year period and 56.91 per cent in the second thirty-year period. Apart from the normal increase, the increase in the second thirty-year period may also be due to better recording which the tribals themselves may have insisted upon protected as they are under the Constitution of India. In 1901 Hindi speakers included speakers of Urdu and several Bihari dialects. In 1931 the number of Hindi speakers went down by 40.89 per cent when Urdu speakers and speakers of several Bihari dialects were enumerated separately. The increase by 38.13 per cent of the Hindi speakers in the last thirty-year period (1931-61) may be treated as normal increase of Hindi speakers as such, without taking into account Urdu speakers or speakers of other Bihari dialects.

BILINGUALISM

According to the Census of 1961, 1,05,157 persons or 7.3 per cent of the total number of speakers in the district spoke a subsidiary language. Of the persons speaking a subsidiary language in the district, 4.0 per cent spoke Bengali, 2.5 per cent spoke English, 0.3 per cent spoke Urdu, 0.2 per cent spoke Hindi and 0.04 per cent spoke Santali.

Among the Bengali Mother Tongue Group

44,178 Bengali-speaking persons constituting 3.37 per cent of the total Bengali-speaking persons (13,08,060) of the district spoke a subsidiary language. Among all Bengali-speaking persons 2.7 per cent spoke English, 0.3 per cent spoke Urdu, 0.2 per cent spoke Hindi and 0.05 per cent spoke Santali as subsidiary languages.

Among the Hindi Mother Tongue Group

6,779 Hindi-speaking persons constituting 36.04 per cent of the total Hindi-speaking persons (18,809) spoke a subsidiary language. Among all Hindi-speaking persons 31.9 per cent spoke Bengali, 4.0 per cent spoke English and 0.08 per cent spoke Urdu as subsidiary languages.

Among the Urdu Mother Tongue Group

6,059 Urdu-speaking persons constituting 51.56 per cent of the total Urdu-speaking persons (11,750) spoke a subsidiary language. Among all Urdu-speaking persons 49.8 per cent spoke Bengali, 1.2 per cent spoke Hindi and 0.4 per cent spoke English as subsidiary languages.

Among the Santali Mother Tongue Group

Bilingualism is very common among the tribals living in a mixed society composed of other social and cultural milieus. The tribals there come in contact with other linguistic groups and adopt their languages as subsidiary languages in their daily life. In this district, 44,778 Santali-language speakers forming 44.78 per cent of the total Santali speakers (99,981) spoke a subsidiary

language. Among all Santali speakers, 49.8 per cent spoke Bengali, 1.2 per cent spoke Hindi and 0.4 per cent spoke English as subsidiary languages according to the Census of 1961.

The Bengali Language as spoken in the District

According to Grierson[1] the Western dialect of Bengali is spoken in this district as in the neighbouring Bankura district and the western portions of Burdwan district. It[2] differs from Standard Bengali in having a broader pronunciation. In this dialect, a long ō is sometimes substituted for the ā of Standard Bengali, as for instance *bōllē* (pronounced *bollē*), he said, is substituted for *balila* (pronounced *bollō*); *hōla* (pronounced holō), it happened, is substituted for *haila*. The sound *u* sometimes substitutes the sound ō of Standard Bengali, as for instance, *Chhutu*, small, substitutes *chhōta*; *tumar*, yours, substitutes *tōmār*. The sound ē likewise is sometimes written *yā* and pronounced ä, like the short *a* in *cat*. Thus, *ēk*, one, is pronounced äk, and *gēla*, he went, is sometimes written as *gyāla*, and pronounced *galō*. As regards consonants the letter *l* is substituted for *n*, and thus *lai*, I am not, stands for *nai*. *lāch*, a dance, for *nāch*, *lā*, a boat, for *nā*, *ladī*, a river, for *nadī*. The final vowel of a verb in this dialect is nasalized, and thus *khāyẽ* substitutes *khāyē* (short for *khāiyā*), having eaten and *karĩ* substitutes *kari*, let us make. The singular forms of personal pronouns like *āmi* and *tumi* are replaced by *mui*, I or *tui*, you. In the conjugation of verbs, singular forms like *māgli*, I asked for, stands for the standard *māgilām*; *balli*, I said, stands for *balilām*. In the second person we thus find *āchhis* for *āchha*, thou art. In the third person of the past tense we find the termination ō with intransitive and ē and *ēk* with transitive verbs. Thus, there is *hōlō*, he was and *ballē* or *ballĕk*, he said, instead of the standard *balila* for the last. The use of contract verbal forms in the conjunctive Participle of casual verbs is pronounced, and thus, there is *uriyẽ* for *urāiyā*, having caused to fly, and *buliyē* for *bōlāiyā*, having summoned.

The following is a specimen of this dialect, spoken in Birbhum and other neighbouring districts :

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[1] G. A. Grierson—Linguistic Survey of India: Vol. 5: Indo-Aryan Family, Eastern Group, Part I. Calcutta, 1903. pp. 69-70.

[2] Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji places this dialect of East Birbhum under the Eastern dialect of West Bengal prevalent in Radha proper *vide* "The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language", Part I. Calcutta, 1926. pp. 139-142.

"Ēk (āk) lōkēr duṭā bēṭā chhila ; tādēr mājhē chhuṭu beṭā tār bāp-kē ballek, 'bāp hē, āmādēr daulatēr jā hisyā āmi pāba tā āmā-kē dāō'." (A man had two sons. Of them the younger son said to his father — O father, give me the share of our property which I am to get).

The Santali language as spoken in the district

One of the ancient tongues of India, Santali, belonging to the Munda branch of the Austric family is an important language of the district. The form of the language spoken in the district is Northern Santali, which is considered to be the standard form of the language as opposed to the other form, namely Southern Santali. As earlier noted by Grierson,[1] Santali has been influenced by the neighbouring Aryan languages, Bengali and Hindi so far as the vocabulary is concerned, though the broad agglutinative nature of the language remains the same as in old days. Grierson,[2] however, noted how the sources from which words are borrowed influence to some extent the form in which they are adopted. Thus the short *a* is kept in Santali in borrowings from Hindi, but is pronounced *ā* when borrowed from Bengali.

Having an agglutinative form and some checked consonants like k', c', t', p' and other peculiarities of its own, the following is a specimen of the language from the district: "mit hoḍ-ren bāreā koḍa gidrakin tahekantaea, ar unkin motore hudinicdo apate metadea - 'e baba, inre paḍaok menak-ak-reak bakhra den-em-ka-tinme, ado aidaritaete hatiñatkina'." (A man had two sons. And the little one said to his father — 'O father, give me my share of the property'. So he divided the property into two shares.).

Hindi as spoken in the district

Hindi, as spoken in the district, is the Standard Hindi or *Khari-boli* as prevalent throughout India. The Census of 1961 enumerated the speakers of Bihari language like Maithili, Magadhi and Bhojpuri separately, though the Kosali dialects like Awadhi, Bagheli and Chattisgarhi have not been shown in the said Census.

The speech of the midland India, this language remains a communication speech in the district, especially in the urban areas.

Though in 1901 the number of Hindi speakers included Urdu and Bihari-language speakers, the largest number of Hindi

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[1] G. A. Grierson—Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. IV, Munda and Dravidian Languages, Calcutta, 1906, p. 32.

[2] loc. cit.

speakers as such was recorded in the district during the Census of 1951. In 1951 they numbered 34,257 being 3.21 per cent of the district population. In 1961 the number of Hindi speakers went down by 45.09 per cent over the Census figures of 1951, being 18,809 and forming only 1.30 per cent of the district population. The fall in number in 1961 may be due to considerable emigration of such speakers from the district.

Script: Bengali

The earliest epigraphic evidence of writing in Bengal is a fragmentary Mahasthan inscription found in Bogra district (now in Bangladesh) in the Brahmi script which though similar to the script used in the inscriptions of Asoka are considered by some on palaeographic grounds to be pre-Asokan. By a course of evolution this Brahmi script which is found to be fully developed during the time of Asoka gave rise to all the present day Indian scripts which are written from the left to the right. This is not a place to enter into a detailed description of such evolution, and briefly it may be stated that during the 4th century A.D. the Brahmi script gave rise to three patterns in Northern India which have been classified by R. D. Banerji[1] as, (1) Eastern Gupta variety, (2) North-Western Gupta viriety and (3) South-Western Gupta variety. The Eastern Gupta variety gradually gave rise to proto-Bengali during the reign of the Palas in Bengal, and the script almost forms itself into the present day Bengali script in the Deopara inscription of Vijayasena (circa A.D. 1120) in which 22 of the letters of the alphabet had assumed their present-day forms. The Bengali script had almost taken their present-day from in the manuscript of *Srikrishnakirtana*.

Santali

The Santali language is written either in Roman or in Bengali script. The use of the Roman script for the language is a heritage of the nineteenth century when the missionaries of the Northern churches began working among the Santals in this part of the country and in the neighbouring Santal Parganas district of Bihar. While the Christian Santals use the Roman script for their dialect, the traditional Santals use the Bengali script. While checked consonants like k, c, t and p are used with apostrophes above them in the Roman script, they are used in the Bengali script with a *bisarga* sign followed by the consonant with a *hasanta* mark. Besides, the half-vowel between *a*

[1] R. D. Banerji—The Origin of the Bengali Script, Calcutta, 1919.

and *u* is now written with a half *au* sign in Bengali (ৗ) after a consonant. In the Bengali script Santals use letters like ঞ, ঃ, ৎ and *hasanta* signs profusely to be more accurate in their pronunciation.

RELIGION

The Census of 1961 enumerated 6 religious groups in the district, namely Hindus (numbering 10,43,661 persons), Muslims (3,99,513), Christians (1,804), Jains (660), Sikhs (411), Buddhists (76). The said Census recorded only one Brahmo to be living in the district. Of the tribals, again, it recorded only 76 Santals to be professing their own faith. May be, the Brahmo and the Santals returned Hinduism as their religion. While Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Sikhs are most numerous in rural areas, Jains are mostly to be found in urban areas, who are possibly recent immigrants connected with trade and commerce.

Hinduism

Hinduism as found in the district through its various forms is quite eclectic in nature. Having influences of tāntric Buddhism on the one hand and folk-rituals on the other, it expresses itself through Śaivism, Śāktaism, Vaishṇavism and various gods and godlings, fairs and festivals. It is, however, difficult to trace the chronology and the history in all details of the different forms of this religion. Purāṇic legends are there, while some very powerful personalities, born here, have made distinctive contribution in their fields of religious worship right from the medieval days. The religion, as it appears now in the district in its various forms, is briefly outlined below.

Vaishnavism

A seat of early *Gauḍiya* or Bengal Vaishṇavism the district is hallowed with the memory of Jayadeva or Mouza Jayadev-Kenduli in Ilambazar police station and Chandidasa of Nanur in Nanur police station. The Vaishṇava Bhakti cult which began to emerge during the rule of the late Pāla kings reached its epitome in the *Gita-govinda* of Jayadeva, a court-poet of Lakshmaṇasena, towards the end of the 12th century A.D. A poetic and religious composition of the highest order, describing the love-story of Kṛisṇa and Rādhā, *Gīta-Govinda* was an inspiring source of Chaitanyaism of some three hundred years later. It has been said[1] that the Rādhā-legend along with its erotic exuberance,

[1] S. K. De—Early history of the Vaisnava faith and movement in Bengal. Calcutta, 1961. p. 12. cf. S. Dasgupta—Obscure religious cults, Calcutta, 1962. pp. 113-4.

inspiring Jayadeva, Nimbarka and the writers of such late Purāṇas as the *Brahmavaivarta* might have its origin from an unknown source. In Bengal Vaishṇavism, however, the theme of *Parakiyā* love developed, distinct from the love depicted in the Purāṇas. This theme, which was a theological speculation in the early Bengal Vaishṇavism, became a matter of practice with the Vaishṇava Sahajiyās. Tradition holds that Chandidāsa, the Bengali lyricist of the 14th century A.D. was a Sahajiyā Sādhaka himself, divinising human love which has been superbly expressed in his Rādhā-kṛīsṇa songs. We know that secret *yogik* control of sex-pleasure, transforming it into transcendental bliss, combined with different theological systems gave rise to different religious cults. Similar in some respects to Hindu Tāntricism or Buddhist Tāntricism including the Buddhist Sahajiyā cult, the Vaishṇava Sahajiyā movement, influenced by *Yoga* and *Tantra*, put stress on love and affirmed that all truth lay in the microcosm of the human body. The Vaishṇava Sahajiyās assimilated the theological aspect of the love-making of Rādhā and Krīsṇa of Vaishṇavism, defied human love and sought for the divine in man.

They believed in the eternal love-making of Rādhā and Kṛīsṇa, and they also believed that Rādhā and Kṛīsṇa manifested themselves in real men and women. Every person has his *svarupa* (real nature) within himself associated with his *rupa* (physical form). Thus, while attributing divinity to man, the Vaishṇava Sahajiyās have not denied life on earth or human love. Their humanistic approach to life and religion is in line with many other medieval religious movements as also with the traditional Hindu and Buddhist Tāntricism.

Kenduli, the birth place of Jayadeva, is still a pilgrim centre of Vaishṇavas, drawing thousands of them to the annual fair held on the last day of the Bengali month *Paush* and the first two days of *Māgh*. Nanur, the birth place of Chandidāsa is similarly another pilgrim centre of Vaishṇavas, inspiring them right from the days of Chaitanyadeva, who was himself inspired by the writings of Jayadeva and Chandidāsa.

Although it has been maintained that the Vaishṇava Sahajiyā cult followed the advent of Chaitanyaism, Chaitanyadeva, with his followers, gave a new lease of life to the Vaishṇava faith in the medieval days. Chaitanyadeva, with his *Rādhā-bhāva*, that is, the attitude of love of Rādhā towards Kṛīsṇa, placed Bengal Vaishṇavism on the map of pan-Indian Vaishṇavism in his days.

Nityānanda, an associate of Chaitanyadeva, was born of Garbhabas in Mayureswar police station and the philosophy of love of Chaitanyadeva began to be preached here right from the medieval days. Even to this day a fair is held there every year to commemorate the birth ceremony of Nityānanda. A number of Vaishṇava festivals like Rās Jātrā in the Bengali month of Kārttik and Dôl Jātrā in the Bengali month of Phālgun are held in many places of the district, like Birchandrapur in Mayureswar police station, Supur in Bolpur police station, Mangaldihi in Ilambazar police station etc.

The Vaishṇava Sahajiyā movement has perhaps found expression in another form among the Bāuls who frequent the fairs and festivals of the district, and specially the fairs held at Santiniketan in the Bengali month of *Paush* and at Jayadev-Kenduli thereafter. The Bāuls, as we know, consist of householders and mendicants belonging to the Hindu and Muslim communities.[1] While the Hindu Bāuls are Vaisṇavite, the Muslim Bāuls are Sufi-istic, both emphasizing the mystic aspect of divine love. Free and unsophisticated in their manner, the Bāuls may have drawn inspiration from the earlier Sahajiyās, who practised secret sexo-*yogik* methods, to which was added the philosophy of all-encompassing love of the Vaishṇavas. The Bāuls say that their beloved lies within their heart (*Maner Mānush*) and their whole effort, *yogik* or otherwise, is directed towards a search for him.

The seat of early Vaishṇavism, Chaitanyaism, Sahajiyā Vaishṇavism and Bāul philosophy, the district has seen the various Vaishṇava movements for centuries. The movements are, however, humanistic in nature and the numerous Vaishṇava fairs and festivals of the district, attended by the common folk even to this day, speak volumes about their humanism.

Śāktaism

The District has been a seat of Śāktaism and Śakti worship from hoary past. Abounding in as many as six Śākta *Pīṭhas*, the Śakti cult of the district may have been prevalent in the district, as in Bengal as a whole,[2] since the days of the later Guptas and the Pālas. While the cult of the mother-goddess is considered to be current since pre-Vedic days, 'Śakti' as a female creative force came to be connected with the *Devisukta*, a hymn of the *Ṛigveda* (X. 125). In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* again *Śakti* was euologised in the form of *Chaṇḍī*. In course of time the

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[1] ibid. pp. 160-1.
[2] R. C. Majumdar (ed.)—The History of Bengal, Vol. I, Hindu Period. Dacca, 1943. p. 407.

form, however, became eclectic, assimilating many non-Aryan features and proliferating in varied forms and names till Buddhist mysticism got mixed with it. The fusion of Śāktaism and Buddhist mysticism may have created the highly esoteric and *Tāntrik* form of Śākta worship in the Śākta *piṭhas* on the one hand, and the popular form of worship of the deity under various names throughout the district.

The *Śākta piṭhas*, as we have already said, have become the seats of Śakti worship. Drawing upon the legend of Daksha-yajña-nāsa of the *Mahābhārata*, probably during the earlier part of medieval period a further legend was added to the older one describing the dismemberment of the body of the deceased Sati and the origin of the *Piṭhas* or holy seats wherever the limbs of Sati fell. It has been said that Siddha-*piṭhas* connected with Sati's limbs came to be known as such not earlier than the 14th or 15th century.[1] It has also been said that the association of the limbs of the goddess with the *Piṭhas* may have some relation with the *Tāntrik* ritual called "Piṭhanyāsa".[2] Analogy in this regard has also been traced with the enshrinement of Buddha's corporal relics in the Buddhist *Stupas*.[3]

A composition of probably the early years of the eighteenth century (C. 1670-1720),[4] the *Piṭhanirṇaya* or *Mahāpiṭhanirupaṇa* read with the *Śivacharita*, a letter work, gives the list of Piṭhas and *Upapiṭhas* of the district. The *Śivacharita* mentions Vakranatha as a *Mahāpiṭha* where Sati's *manas* (heart) fell, the presiding goddess being Pāpaharā, and her Bhairava or male consort Vakranatha. The *Śivacharita* also indicates that Dakshiṇabāhu (right hand) of Sati fell there, and the presiding goddess there is Vakreswari living with her consort Vakranatha. The *Piṭha-nirṇaya* indicates that *manas* (heart) of Sati fell there, and the presiding goddess is Mahishamardini, living with her male consort Vakranatha. Śakti in the form of Devi Mahishamardini still attracts people to Bakreswar in Dubrajpur police station, which is both a Śākta and a Śaivite pilgrim centre. The cremation ground (*smasān*) here was the seat of *tāntrik* worship of some great *Śākta Sādhakas* like Aghoribābā, Pramatha Chakravarti etc. That Bakreswar was a centre of Hindu *tāntrik* worship, which is

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[1] D. C. Sircar—'The Śākta Pīṭhas' in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. Letters. Vol. XIV, No. 1. Calcutta, 1948. p. 6., f.n.
[2] ibid., p. 7.
[3] loc. cit.
[4] ibid. p. 24.

highly personal, bereft of pomp and grandeur like other kinds of worship, is attested by its appellation *guhyatirtha* (secret pilgrim centre). The Śāktas of the district still hold the place in great esteem, and being a pilgrim centre of Śaivites and Bāuls, Bakreswar remains a centre of *yogik* and secret cult of several systems of worship.

Aṭṭahāsa

A place in Labhpur in Labhpur police station, known as a sacred seat (*Piṭha*) earlier than the period when the *Piṭhanirṇaya* was composed, is hallowed by the legend that Sati's lips (*oshṭha*) fell here at the time of dismemberment of her body. Phullarā the presiding goddess, along with her male consort (*Bhairava*) Visvesa or Visvanatha attracts the Śāktas to this place. It is said that before offering the sacrificial food (*bhōg*) to the goddess, a part of the same is offered to the jackals from an enclosure meant for feeding them. The remainder of the food is then taken as *prasāda.* The manner in which food is offered to these jackals suggests that *tāntrik* rituals connected with Śakti worship were prevalent here.

Tarapith

A place near Chandipur in Rampurhat police station, Tarapiṭh is considered to be a sacred seat (piṭha) of the goddess Tārini along with his male consort (*Bhairava*) Unmatta were, it is said, the eye-ball (netrāṁsatārā) of Sati fell at the time of dismemberment of her limbs.

With its formidable cremation ground on the bank of the Dwaraka river, Tarapiṭh has been the seat of worship of the *tāntrik yogis* from a distant past, of whom Bāmākshyāpā was perhaps the most renowned towards the end of the nineteenth century. Much has been said about the origin of Tara, though no final verdict could be given as to whether she was a Hindu or a Buddhist goddess. Etymologically meaning the goddess who removes dangers, her origin has been traced from Tibet, China and other Himalayan regions through Buddhism.[1] It has also been said that Nagarjuna of the seventh century A.D. imported the worship of Tara from Tibet to this region when Srong-San-Gampo, the king of Tibet occupied the present Assam and Nepal during the advance of Harshavardhana and Bhaskaravarman towards Bengal, ruled by Śaśāṅka. It has been supposed that the *tāntrik* ritual and specially the Buddhist tāntricism raised its head at this time till the Pālas came in Gauḍa and Rāḍha giving fresh lease of life to such Buddhist practices.[2]

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1 Benoy Ghosh—*Paschim Baṅger Saṁskṛti,* Calcutta, 1957. p. 178.
2 loc. cit.

Considered to be an *Upapiṭha*, Nalhati in the police station of the same name, is said to be the seat of *tāntrik* rites and rituals for a long time. The name first appeared in the *Piṭhanirṇaya*, wherein it has been said that Sati's *nalā* (lower part of the elbow?) fell here, the presiding goddess being Kāli, living with her male consort Yogesa. The *Śivacharita*, on the other hand, says that Sati's *Śiranali* (a part of the head) fell here, and the presiding goddess is Sephālikā, living with the male consort, Yogisa. The common folk, however, says that the forehead of Sati fell here, wherefrom the name Lalāṭeswari > Nalhaṭṭeswari > Nalhati. Situated on the top of a hillock, the god-head named 'Pārvati' is represented by a small piece of stone here.

Nalhati

A place in Sainthia in Sainthia police station Nandipura is mentioned in both the *Piṭhanirṇaya* and the *Śivacharita*, the latter, considering it to be an *Upapiṭha*. Considered to be a sacred seat of the Śāktas, it is said that Sati's *Hāra* or *Hārāṁsa* (part of the necklace) fell here at the time of the dismemberment of her body. The presiding goddess here is Nandini, living with her male consort Nandikesvara.

Nandipura

A village in Bolpur station, Jaljol has a temple of Kankali Devi which is also called the temple of Kankali Tala. Though not mentioned in the earlier books, the place is known as one of the saptapiṭhas where the waist of the dismembered body of Sati fell.

Jaljol

A village in Dubrajpur police station, Phulbera, contains the temple of Danteswari, where it is said that teeth (*danta*) of the dismembered body of Sati fell. Though not mentioned in earlier books, the common folk consider it to be one of the many *śāktapiṭhas* spread throughout the district.

Phulbera

Of the several other Śākta deities prevailing in the district, Kāli is perhaps worshipped in large numbers. Although it is not known if Nairātmā, a goddess of Vajrayāna Buddhism, influenced the iconography of Kāli, it has been presumed that her image was first conceived of by some Bengali *Tāntriks*, may be Krishnananda Agambagis, of the middle ages.[1]

Other Sakta deities: Kali,

One of the oldest Kāli imges called Guhyakāli, with two hands and seated on and decorated with snake-images, is to be found at Akalipur (J. L. No. 92) in Nalhati police station. It is

[1] Jitendranath Bandyopadhyay—*Pañcopāsanā*. Calcutta, 1960. pp. 276-7.

said that the deity was established according to *tāntrik* rituals under orders of Maharaj Nandakumar.[1]

Biśālākshi

Chandidās, the Vaishṇava Sahajiyā poet of the pre-Chaitanya days, worshipped Biśālākshi or Bāsuli at Nanur, whose temple and image, may be, in changed forms, still stand there. Biśālākshi, a Śākta deity, is also called Bāgiswari. Although she is one of the ten Mahāvidyās of the Śāktas, *tāntrik*-Buddhistic traits as also folkish characteristics have been traced in her.

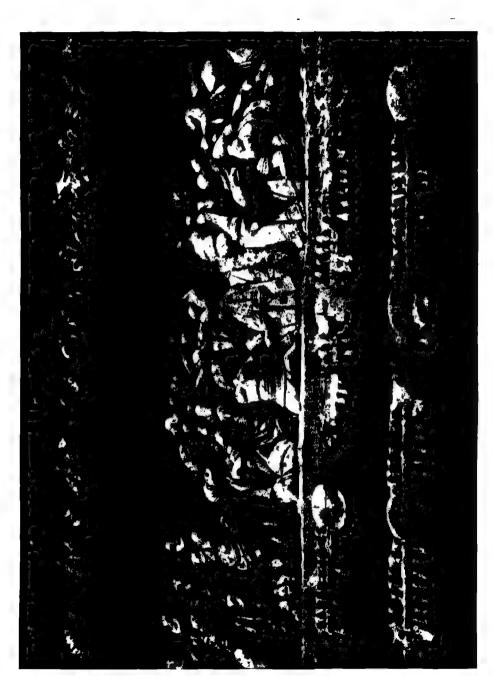
Bhubaneswari

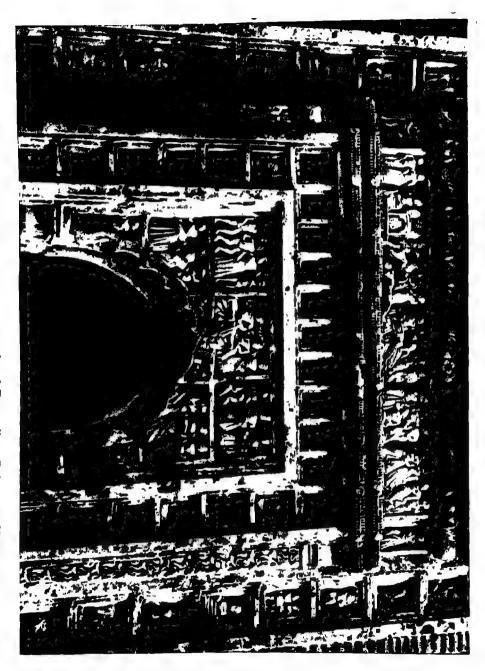
At village Bara (J. L. No. 107) in Nalhati police station there is a Śākta goddess seated on the image of a lion called Bhubaneswari. Variously called Bhubaneswari-Gauri, Siṁhanad-Lokeswar, Manjubar, the goddess is said to be the Buddhist Prajnāpāramitā. It has been conjectured that *tāntrik* Buddhism spread in this region between the 8th and 9th century A.D. and the 10th-12th century A.D., which left its marks on the images of gods and goddesses now included in the Hindu pantheon.

Śaivaism

Śaivaism finds expression in the district through the several temples of Śiva existing there. Connected also with Śakti worship as the male consort (*Bhairava*) of Śakti, Śiva has his main centre of worship at Bakreswar (J. L. No. 42) in Dubrajpur police station, which is considered to be a Śaivite pilgrim centre. Vakranatha, the deity of the place is worshipped by pilgrims, and a large fair is held there during the *Śivarātri* festival in February-March every year.

At Bhandirban (J. L. No. 202) in Suri police station there is a large temple dedicated to Bhandeswar Mahadeva, attracting Śaivites from all around the district. At Bhimgara (J. L. No. 139) in Khayrasol police station there are five small temples, which, legends say, were erected over five *liṅgams* established and worshipped by the Pandavas. On the other side of the river Ajay there is another temple over a *liṅgam*, said to have been established by Bhim, called Bhimeswar temple. In Dubrajpur (J. L. No. 137) in the police station of the same name there are a number of Śaiva temples, frequented by Hindus. The temple of *Buro Śiva* at Paikor (J. L. No. 76) in Murarai police station is an instance of the godhead becoming popular in the region as he is affectionately called 'Buro' (old) Śiva. Similar old Śiva temples under various names are there at Ganpur (J. L. No. 18) in Mahammad Bazar police station, Brahmandihi (J. L. No. 7)

[1] Benoy Ghosh—op. cit., p. 166.

7. *Rādhā* weeping over *Kṛishṇa's* journey to Mathurā, a scene depicted on the northern facade of the Dewanji temple, Hetampur.

8. The northern facade of the *Śiva* temple of Dewanji at Babupara, Hetampur.

in Nanur police station, Kaleswar (J. L. No. 207), Mallarpur (J. L. No. 22), Mayureswar (J. L. No. 136), Kotasur (J.L. No. 102) and Dabuk (J. L. No. 158) in Mayureswar police station. The Śiva *liṅgams* in all these places have names of their own like Mayureswar, Ekchakreswar, Suratheswar etc. etc.

Festivals, connected with Śiva, like Śivarātri, Gājan etc. take place in almost all the police stations of the district as in other parts of West Bengal.

Dharma worship

Very popular in the district, the worship of Dharma is celebrated with much éclat, starting from the full moon day of Baiśākh and continuing till the full moon day of Śrāvana, throughout the district. Apart from the festival which takes place in the urban areas, specially in Suri town, it is organized in great numbers in the rural areas. Karidya (J. L. No. 106), Kalipur (J. L. No. 105), Purandarpur (J. L. No. 63), Langulia (J. L. No. 197) in Suri police station, Tantipara (J. L. No. 51) in Rajnagar police station, Babuijor (J. L. No. 78), Barra (J. L. No. 82), Sira (J. L. No. 104), Bhadulia (J. L. No. 58) in Khayrasol police station, Belia (J. L. No. 193), Iswaripur (J. L. No. 155) in Sainthia police station, Barasangra (J. L. No. 53), Kaligram (J. L. No. 54) in Ahmadpur police station, Surul (J. L. No. 104) in Bolpur police station and Jaidev-Kenduli (J. L. No. 63) in Ilambazar police station — all in rural areas, have either Dharmarājṭhākur in some improvised temple located there or festivals in the name of Dharmarājṭhākur take place there every year. The main features of the festival in the district are that it is popular among the non-Brahmins of whom Haḍis, Doms, Bauris, fishermen, weavers constitute the main classes. The folkish traits like *Chaḍak*, *Gājan*, *Bānphoḍa* and *Soṅ* form parts of the festivals connected with the worship. Having no image of the deity, stonepieces, and sometimes, images of tortoises stand for Dharmarājṭhākur. The said god is also found associated with Manasā, Chandi or Kāli, standing for female energy.

It may, in this connection, be stated that Dharma worship is a feature of the entire Rāḍha area. Bereft of Hindu ideas of higher order, the worship is an admixture of the relics of dead Buddhism, popular Hindu ideas and practices and tribal beliefs and ceremonies. Thus, it is not purely Buddhist Hindu or autochthonous in origin and nature, but is an admixture of all.[1]

[1] S. Dasgupta—*op. cit.* p. 260.

Folk-gods. Chandi

Chandi is considered to be a Śākta deity of non-Aryan origin. Although worships of Chandi are held independently at Krishnapur (J. L. No. 114) and Bhabaniganj in Khayrasol police station, she is generally associated with Dharmarājṭhākur as Śakti is with Śiva. She also appears in folkish forms in different places of the district bearing names like Pāyrāchandi, Byaghrachandi, Barāhichandi, Sonāichandi etc.

Manasa

Although non-Aryan features have been observed in Manasā, she is traditionally considered to be goddess of the snakes. In the district independent worship of Manasā takes place at Jamalpur (J. L. No. 92) in Khayrasol police station, Gangapur (J. L. No. 94) in Ilambazar police station, Kumira (J. L. No. 57) and Saota (J. L. No. 59) in Nanur police station. She is also worshipped with Dharmarājṭhākur as the *Śakti* of the latter.

Brahmadatyi

A peculiar feature of the district is that at a number of places the worship of Brahmadaitya or Brahmadatyi takes place some time every year. The centre of attraction is a tree haunted by the ghost of a Brahman. The popular belief is that a worship at the spot ensures cure from disease, fulfilment of a desire etc. The pilgrims lift a handful of earth from a place and drop at another in the site. Such worship takes place at Ajoypur (J. L. No. 12), Nagari (J. L. 189) in Suri police station, Dighalgram (J. L. No. 26) in Mahammad Bazar police station, Kasba (J. L. No. 16) in Bolpur police station etc.

Islam

Islam spread to this area perhaps in the 13th century A.D. when the district passed under Muslim rule. At that time Lakhanor or Lakhnur was an important frontier post of the Muslim rulers of this region which place has now been traced in the present day Rajnagar. The Pathan *Jagirdars* of Rajnagar kept guard on their frontier principalities and they continued to do so even during the Mughal regime. Some of these rulers were benevolent, and the spread of Islam was facilitated by their generous help towards construction of various Muslim institutions like *Madrasas*, mosques etc.

Sufis, divided into several orders, entered Bengal after helping the spread of Islam in Northern India, perhaps even before the Muslim conquest. The Sufiistic custom of song and dance which helps one into passing away of consciousness in mystic union with God through spiritual guides (*Murshids* or *Saikhs*) appealed to the common folk already knowing the Buddhist and Hindu Sahajiya cult having similar ideas.

The Sufis might have also converted the existing local preceptors and turned their seats of worship into *dargahs* to help in the spread of Islam.

In popular parlance the Sufis came to be called Pirs, and the seats of Pirs were venerated by the common folk.

Even to this day a number of fairs and festivals are held in the district in honour of the Sufis or Pirs of the middle ages. Festivals in memory of Chand Pir take place at Alinagar (J. L. No. 23) in Mahammad Bazar police station in January-February every year. Similarly, Fakir Saheb's fair takes place in March-April every year at Islampur (J. L. No. 140) in Dubrajpur police station, and Burapir's fair takes place at Bara (J. L. No. 107) in Nalhati police station every year in February-March. Khustikuri (J. L. No. 17) in Ilambazar police station is again hallowed by the memory of a saint called Saiyad Shah Abdullah Kirmani of the 17th century A.D. who had powers over serpents and his name is repeated in formulas of enchantment even to this day. Makhdumnagar in Mayureshwar police station has a tomb of a saint, Makhdum Saiyid Shah Zahir-ud-din of the 16th century which is frequented by pilgrims for relief from ailments. The tomb of another saint Shah Mahbub or Data Sahib, who died in A.D. 1892, is also visited by many votaries even to this day, which is in Patharchapri (J. L. No. 24) in Suri police station.

Christianity

Christianity spread to the region through the activities of the Christian Missionary societies during early British rule. The local Baptist Mission, a branch of the Serampore Mission, was the oldest Christian Mission at work in Birbhum.[1] They were possibly attracted by the large number of tribal folk inhabiting the district, some of whom were converted to the new religion through the endeavours of the missionaries. Doctors Carey and Marshman of the Serampore Mission sent the earliest missionary Mr. James Williamson to the district, who was an Assistant Surgeon at the Suri Jail.[2] The other mission at work there was the Methodist Episcopal Mission, which started work at Bolpur at a later period.

According to the Census of 1961, Santals numbering 521 belong to the Christian community.

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[1] L. S.S.O'Malley — Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. pp. 31-2.

[2] loc. cit.

CASTE
Hindus

Hindus are usually divided into three broad classes: the *Varna* Hindu, the *Nabasakha* and the *Jal-achal* (untouchable) castes. Brahmins, Kayasthas and Vaidyas belong to the first category. Traditional trading castes like *Gandhavaniks* and *Tambulivaniks*, except *Subarnavaniks*, and the artisan castes like *Tantubayas*, *Kumbhakaras* and *Karmakaras* are in the *Nabasakha sreni*. The *Jal-achal* classes are to be found in the President of India's schedule for backward classes, the people being called 'Scheduled Castes.'

The Hindus of the district form 72.17 per cent of the total population. In 1951 they comprised 72.60 per cent of the district population. In the 1951-61 decade they have registered a growth rate of 35 per cent over their number in 1951. The percentage distribution of the Hindus in different police stations are as follows: Suri 80.98; Rajnagar 90.30; Mahammad Bazar 77.65; Sainthia 86.03; Dubrajpur 76.08; Khayrasol 84.15; Ilambazar 62.64; Bolpur 85.03; Labhpur 77.32; Nanur 73.61; Mayureswar 79.77; Rampurhat 70.30; Nalhati 53.96; and Murarai 40.79.

Brahmins

The Brahmins of the district belong to *Rāḍhī Srenī* and are spread over the district. The Hetampur Raj family, however, belongs to *Srotriya class*. Bhavadeva Bhatta of Siddhala, supposed to be a village in the district, is the traditional *Rāḍhī* Brahmin of the *Savarna Caudhuri* group, hailing from Kanyakubja during the regime of Ballalasena.

Kayasthas

Kayasthas of the district belong to the *uttara-rāḍhī* class and are spread over the district. They form an important part of the *Varna* Hindu society and differ very little from the Brahmins in economic and occupational status.

Craftsmen[1]
Malakars

The Malakars are a class of people engaged in making complicated decorations with natural flowers, keeping flower gardens and making exquisite ornaments and decorations in *sola* (*aeschynomene aspera*, linn. pith), encrusted with sequins, wires and spring coils, and *Dāk* (coloured or enamelled, thin mica foils) for religious, marriage and other purposes. They are both gardeners and interior decorators, and are to be found at Nischinta (J. L. No. 28) in Khayrasol police station, Paikar (J. L. No. 76) in Murarai police station, Mahula (J. L. No. 30) and Mallarpur (J. L. No. 22) in Mayureswar police station, Dubraj-

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[1] A. Mitra – The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal. Calcutta, 1953. pp. 290-341.

pur (J. L. No. 137) and Balijuri (J. L. No. 21) in Dubrajpur police station, Rajnagar and Suri town.

Sankhakars

Sankhakars or Sankharis deal in conch-shell by cleaning it by filing, producing round rings with the help of a crescent shaped saw and by shaping the rough round slices of conch-shells into bangles and engraving decorative designs on the outer side of them and by decorating conches used as blowing horns.

Some such families of Sankhakars are to be found at Karidhya (J. L. No. 106) in Suri police station and Baram (J. L. No. 139) in Mahammad Bazar police station.

Caste-guild Workers:

Caste-guild workers of different classes are to be found in the district. They are mainly engaged in home industries, and the avocations they follow are traditional.

Kumbhakaras

Kumbhakaras, doing terracotta dolls and idols and clay images, are also to be found in the district. At Mahulara (J. L. No. 189) in Sainthia police station the Kumbhakaras are engaged in household pottery, and at Rajnagar they make coloured dolls and toys.

Sutradharas

Sutradharas or architects and wood-carvers traditionally work on wood, stone, clay and with paints. In Birbhum they did numerous terracotta reliefs and plaques on temples in the past. Now they are mainly engaged in wood-work and can be found at Majhgram (J. L. No. 72), Dubrajpur (J. L. No. 137) and Kota (Sirsha) (J. L. No. 158) in Dubrajpur police station, Rajnagar (J. L. No. 38), Khayradihi (J. L. No. 50) and Tantipara (J. L. No. 51) in Rajnagar police station, Karidhya (J. L. No. 106), Brojergram (J. L. No. 104) and Kalipur (J. L. No. 105) in Suri police station, Gopalpur (J. L. No. 6) in Khayrasol police station and Sonj (J. L. No. 66) in Mayureswar police station.

Kangsakaras

Kangsakaras, makers of *Kansha*, an alloy, are one of the carftsmen dealing in metals in the district. They make religious wares, as also household utensils, and are to be found at Lokpur (J. L. No. 14) in Khayrasol police station and Tinkarbeta (J. L. No. 62) in Ilambazar police station.

Scheduled Castes

4,21,344 persons (of whom 7.32 per cent are literate against 22.09 per cent literacy of the total population) belong to the Scheduled Castes in the district forming 29.14 per cent of the district population (14,46,158). The rural-urban ratio of these people in the district is 94.87 to 5.24; the same proportion of the total population being 93.03 to 6.97. In the rural and urban sectors 29.71 and 21.45 per cent people respectively belong to Scheduled Castes. For every 10,000 persons of the following

Scheduled Castes in West Bengal, 4,281 Mals, 2,559 Doms, 1,429 Chamars. 1,330 Sunris (excluding Saha), 1,306 Haris, 924 Bagdis. 822 Bauris, 587 Lohars, 199 Jelia Kaibartas, 151 Dhobas, 102 Namasudras, 95 Poundras, 56 Jhalomalos, 46 Rajbansis, 30 Paliyas and 18 Kaoras belong to Birbhum district. 6.12 per cent of the total Scheduled Castes of the State lives in this district. They live mostly in Sadar subdivision accounting for nearly 61.11 per cent of the district's total Scheduled Castes population, and in Rampurhat subdivision there live 38.89 per cent of the total Scheduled Castes of the district.

Scheduled Castes villages

Apart from large concentrations of Scheduled Castes people in many villages of the district there are some villages where the entire population belongs to the Scheduled Castes. They are Meheran (J. L. No. 44), Changuria (J. L. No. 76), Dharampur (J. L. No. 183), Murulia Chank (J. L. No. 196) in Suri police station, Malkura (J. L. No. 55), Amla Chaturi (J. L. No. 86) in Rajnagar police station, Dhatrabandi (J. L. No. 42), Bamundiha (J. L. No. 92), Raspur (J. L. No. 101) in Mahammad Bazar police station, Chak Amaipur (J. L. No. 133), Byaspur (J. L. No. 218) in Sainthia police station, Chak Jitua (J. L. No 36), Chak Balaram (J. L. No. 46), Raghunathpur (J. L. No. 101), Noapara (J. L. No. 123), Bhaluka (J. L. No. 207), Paduma (J. L. No. 211) in Dubrajpur police station, Mujrakonda (J. L. No. 35), Raypur (J. L. No. 47), Hatikata (J. L. No 53), Madanpur (J. L. No. 64), Hanulia (J. L. No. 66), Simsa (J. L. No. 86), Maldiha (J. L. No. 88), Brajadihi (J. L. No. 91), Meherpur (J. L. No. 93), Sermara (J. L. No. 127) in Khayrasol police station, Kamaipur (J. L. No. 97) in Ilambazar police station, Bidyadharpur (J. L. No. 34) in Bolpur police station, Uttar Ishakpur (J. L. No. 87) in Labhpur police station, Chak Muitin (J. L. No. 71) in Nanur police station, Palsa (J. L. No. 55), Madhya Gopalpur (J. L. No. 69), Nischintapur (J. L. No. 81), Mohilapara (J. L. No. 165), Bara Chauki (J. L. No. 173) in Rampurhat police station, Alalpur (J. L. No. 15), Erangi (J. L. No. 38), Laskarpur (J. L No. 51), Bhatpara (J. L. No. 61), Kanupur (J. L. No. 87), Parkuta (J. L. No. 138) in Nalhati police station and Mukundapur (J. L. No. 11), Rajchandrapur (J. L. No. 21), Pera (J. L. No. 22), Bhogpur (J. L. No. 129) in Murarai police station.

Scheduled Castes communities

According to the Census of 1961 there are 41,193 Bauris, 1,01,384 Bagdis, 336 Baitis, 223 Bediyas, 11 Beldars, 4,234

Bhuimalis, 1,801 Bhuiyas, 9 Binds, 56,688 Chamars, 2,331 Dhobas, 38,852 Doms, 7 Dosadhs, 1,023 Doais, 54 Ghasis, 18 Gonrhis, 16,440 Haris, 2,338 Kaibartas, 383 Jhalomalos, 216 Kaoras, 2,283 Keots, 520 Khairas, 352 Koches, 17,767 Komais, 155 Kotals, 6 Lalbegis, 4,904 Lohars, 69 Mushahars, 1,616 Mahars, 50,384 Mals, 49 Mallahs, 505 Mehtors, 7,405 Namasudras, 9 Nuniyas, 327 Pasis, 220 Paliyas, 53 Patnis, 8,331 Pods, 356 Rajwars, 5,575 Rajbansis, 14,211 Sunris, 418 Turis, 464 Tiyars in the district.

Distribution in the police stations

The table in Appendix III would reveal the number of some select Scheduled Castes people as spread over in the different police stations of the district. The table would reveal that Chamars and Bagdis are spread over all the thanas while Bauris and Doms are to be found only in Murarai police station. Hadis are spread over in the district except in Mahammad Bazar, Khayrasol, Rampurhat, Murarai and Rajnagar police stations while Dhobas are only to be found in Suri police station. Bhuiyas are likewise to be found only in Rampurhat police station. The percentage of Scheduled Castes population to total population in different police stations is as follows: Suri 30.92; Rajnagar 35.46; Mahammad Bazar 27.01; Sainthia 32.19; Dubrajpur 34.50; Khayrasol 34.07; Ilambazar 24.74; Bolpur 24.36; Labhpur 27.86; Nanur 28.95; Mayureswar 29.22; Rampurhat 29.92; Nalhati 29.67; Murarai 23.48.

Bagdis

Bagdis form the largest scheduled caste population of the district. In 1872 they numbered 56,094 in the district, which figure rose to 88,342 in 1901, came down to 87,519 in 1931, and then again rose to 1,01,384 in 1961. A major cultivating fishing caste of the district, also doing menial work, they were supposed to be the remnant of an aboriginal race, who married low caste Hindus and later became bearers of palanquins and fishermen. It was also supposed in the Census report of 1901 that the caste got its name form *Bagri* or southern Bengal, the old division of Ballala Sena's kingdom. The predominant sub-castes of the Bagdis are Khetri, Kusmetia, Trayodas, Noda and Tentulia, the last one belonging to the highest order among them. A Bagdi cannot marry outside his sub-caste.

The Lets, a caste peculiar to Birbhum, have been grouped with the Bagdis. They are regarded as a sub-caste of the Bagdis, and have two exogamous divisions, Kashyap and

Aladasi, but no sub-castes. They follow the same avocations as the Bagdis.

The Bhollas, found in Labhpur and Mayureswar police stations, are similarly grouped with the Bagdis. An offshoot of the Bagdis, they do not intermarry with the Bagdis and generally work as cultivators and day-labourers.

Bauris

Bauris are a numerically important people of the district. They numbered 24,569 in 1872, 36,235 in 1901, 36,998 in 1931 and 41,193 in 1961. Supposed to be of non-Aryan descent, they are good cultivators, earth-workers and palanquin-bearers. Traces of totemism still survive in their respect for the red-backed heron and the dog and in their objection to touch horse-dung. They are divided into four grades (*thaks*), namely, Mano, Mulo, Sikharia and Dule; and they may have originally come to the district from the adjacent Bankura and Purulia districts. Apart from other Hindu deities, they worship Manasa and Dharmaraj with great enthusiasm in the district. They enjoy a higher status in Birbhum district and do menial work for higher caste Hindus.

Muchis

Muchis or Chamars are also one of the numerically superior Scheduled Castes people of the district. They numbered 41,282 in 1901, 45,395 in 1931 and 56,688 in 1961. Although Muchis have been considered originally to be a branch of the Chamars, they consider themselves to be superior to the Chamars, who work with raw hide and whose females work as midwives, while they are tanners, saddlers, shoe-makers, musicians and basket-makers. They have several subdivisions, namely, *Barabhagiya*, *Chasa*, *Kinur* and *Betna*. The majority of the Muchis are Saivites, and most of the people belonging to the *Betna* subdivision are Vaishnavites.

Mals

Mals form another group of numerically important Scheduled caste people of the district. They numbered 9,346 in 1872, 38,697 in 1901, 40,999 in 1931 and 50,384 in 1961. Similar to the Bagdis in physical aspects and mode of living, they are engaged in fishing, boating and cultivation, and may have originated from the same stock as the Bagdis. Educationally backward, they speak Bengali and worship *Manasa* with great enthusiasm.

Konais

Konais are mostly to be found in Birbhum and Murshidabad districts. They numbered 15,500 in 1901, 14,394 in 1931 and 17,767 in 1961 in the district. They are divided into two sub-castes, namely, *Chasis* and *Kurariars*, the former being mainly

cultivators and occasionally fishermen or field labourers, and the latter being drummers, dealers in hide and labourers. They worship among other Hindu gods and goddesses, Manasa and Dharmaraj with much enthusiasm.

Hadis

Hadis of the district numbered 21,751 in 1872, 27,634 in 1901, 22,321 in 1931 and 16,440 in 1961. The decrease in numbers over the years may be due to the returning of many Hadis as Bhuinmalis in the Censuses. They tap date trees, make bamboo-combs, cultivate lands and are musicians, palanquin-bearers, syces and scavengers. Mehtor is one of their subcastes who removes night-soil, but does not remove dead animals. Bhuinmalis act as cultivators. Females of Dai or Phul Hari act as midwives, while Kahar-Haris are palanquin-bearers. They worship Kali, Mangalchandi, Sitala and other Hindu deities.

Sunris

Sunris of the district including Sahas numbered 16,948 in 1901. Since 1911 Sunris were enumerated excluding the Sahas as the latter claimed that the former were a different caste. In 1931 the Sunris of the district numbered 14,226 and in 1961 the figures stood at 14,211. Their original profession was manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors, but many of them are now engaged in trade and commerce. They are comparatively advanced in education.

Doms

Doms are an important class of people of the district. They numbered 34,897 in 1872, 40,666 in 1901, 36,278 in 1931 and 38,852 in 1961. Also known as Chandals or Dhangaḍs. Doms are considered to have originated from a Dravidian menial caste, or an aboriginal race or a pre-Dravidian stock. According to popular traditions they were a martial race in the middle ages guarding the western border of Bengal under the local chiefs. They are divided into different local groups in different States having nearly no connexion with one another. They are mainly sweepers and remove night-soil and dead bodies in some places. Some also make baskets and mats. Those among them who act as musicians are called *Bajania* Doms. They have also taken to agriculture and many of them work as landless day-labourers.

They are mostly Vaishnavites, and in addition to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa they worship Dharmaraja. A special class of Doms, called Dharma Pandits, act as priests of Dharmathakur.

Scheduled Tribes

1,06,860 persons (of whom 3.40% are literate against literacy to the extent of 22.09% of total population) belonged to the Scheduled Tribes of the district forming 7.39% of the district population. The rural-urban ratio is 98.73: 1.27 per 100

whereas the same ratio for total population of the district is 93.03 : 6.97 per 100. For every 10,000 persons of the following Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal, 889 Koras, 779 Santals, 311 Mahalis, 227 Malpaharias, 9 Oraons, 1 Munda and 1 Lodha belonged to the Birbhum district.

Scheduled Tribes villages

Apart from great concentrations of the Scheduled Tribes, mainly Santals, in some villages, there are some villages in the district whose entire population belongs to the Scheduled Tribes. They are Raypur (J. L. No. 176), Maligram (J. L. No. 67), Sirsha (J. L. No. 184), Chandipur (J. L. No. 191) in Suri police station, Hirapur (J. L. No. 7), Manoharpur (J. L. No. 104) in Rajnagar police station, Kusuma Kandar (J. L. No. 45), Kalidaha Khayrapara (J. L. No. 95), Kalidaha (J. L. No. 96), Kaniara (J. L. No. 119), Simulia (J. L. No. 138), Amaipur (J. L. No. 154) in Mahammad Bazar police station, Patharghata (J. L. No. 57), Uttar Hajrapur (J. L. No 72), Chak Mahespur (J. L. No. 125), Syampur (J. L. No. 146), Suraipur (J. L. No. 206), Dakshinsiur (J. L. No. 215) in Sainthia police station, Pirojpur (J. L. No. 14), Kedarbandh (J. L. No. 28), Asunsuli (J. L. No. 44), Boskanda (J. L. No. 56), Metegaon (J. L. No. 65), Radhamadhabpur (J. L. No 88), Maniram (J. L. No. 102), Kanchannagar (J. L. No. 234) in Dubrajpur police station, Ahmadpur (J. L. No. 56), Domaha Tat (J. L. No. 117) in Khayrasol police station, Mundira (J. L. No. 67) in Ilambazar police station, Danbaripur (J. L. No. 22), Gobindapala (J. L. No. 25), Chak Pali (J. L. No. 49), Asdullapur (J. L. No. 59) in Bolpur police station, Srikrishnapur (J. L. No. 23) in Labhpur police station, Prahladpur (J. L. No. 28), Salgaria (J. L. No. 29), Khojapur (J. L. No. 33), Purandarpur (J. L. No. 34) in Rampurhat police station and Chandanpur (J. L. No. 4), Lakargram (J. L. No. 10) in Murarai police station.

Scheduled Tribes communities

According to the Census of 1961 there are 1 Bhumij, 2 Chakmas, 42 Hos, 5,514 Koras, 5 Kherias (Lodhas), 357 Malpaharias, 15 Mundas, 93 Maghs, 873 Mahalis, 269 Oraons and 93,426 Santals in the district.

Distribution in the police stations

The following is a list of two Scheduled Tribes, namely the Santals and the Koras, who are the only most numerous Scheduled Tribes people inhabiting the district.

DISTRIBUTION OF SELECT SCHEDULED TRIBES PEOPLE IN THE POLICE STATIONS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961

Name of police station	*Santal*	*Kora*
Suri	6,230	513
Rajnagar	5,701	372
Mahammad Bazar	12,439	—
Sainthia	9,107	514
Dubrajpur	3,829	—
Khayrasol	916	—
Ilambazar	5,519	338
Labhpur	3,066	261
Nanur	1,186	206
Mayureswar	6,819	701
Rampurhat	13,139	—
Nalhati	4,646	—
Murarai	4,266	694
Bolpur	16,563	1,343

Santals

Santals came to inhabit the district after the enactment of the Permanent Land Settlement Act of 1793. In 1872 there were only 6,954 Santals in the district which rose to 47,221 in 1901 and 64,079 in 1931 and then to 93,426 in 1961. It will be seen that during the two 30-year periods namely 1901-31 and 1931-61 they have increased considerably in numbers in spite of the fact that from time to time they have had to migrate elsewhere in search of work. In the rural areas they account for 87.51 per cent of the total rural Scheduled Tribes population of the district. In the urban areas too, Santals account for 88 per cent of the total urban Scheduled Tribes people in the district. We have already seen that they are mainly distributed in Bolpur, Mahammad Bazar, Rampurhat, Sainthia, Mayureswar, Suri, Rajnagar and Ilambazar police stations in the district. Speaking the Santali language of the northern variety, the Santals have shown sign of acculturation to a great extent. Because of the impact of external economic, legal and other cultural forces, they have considerably changed their mode of living which includes their house types, food, dress etc. Although no change in their *rites of passage* is noticeable in their daily life in the sphere of religion, they have taken to the worship of Kali and attended many Hindu festivals in the district.[1] The most important

[1] N. Dutta Majumder — The Santal : A study in Culture-Change. Calcutta, 1956. p. 120.

characteristic in the life of the Santals of Birbhum is that individual is gradually gaining a sense of independence there. "This growth of independence in the individual may be related to the growth of the individual ownership of land, and the opening up of new avenues of employment. This has resulted in the individual no longer being dependent on either the village community or the family."[1] A large number of Santals have become Christians and others Hinduized in the sense that they have imbibed certain Hindu manners and customs. A majority of them still stick to their age-old customs as it has been said "the belief in *Thakur* and *bongas* is still strong; the most important annual festivals, and the four *rites de passage* (janam chatiar or birth rites, caco chatiar or rites admitting one to Santal society as a full member, bapla or marriage and bhandan or rites on the occasion of death -- Ed.) are still observed in every Santal village. The priest and the medicine-man continue to act as intermediaries between the people and the beings of the supernatural world."[2]

Koras

Next to Santals, Koras form the next major Scheduled Tribes people of the district. They account for 14.12 per cent of the total urban Scheduled Tribes population of the district. One-fourth of them are found in Bolpur police station whereas in Mayureswar and Murarai police stations they form one-eighth of their total district population. The population figures of the Koras of the district have varied considerably depending from the census of 1872 till the census of 1961. They numbered 3,776 in 1872, 10,267 in 1891, 11,202 in 1901, 9,680 in 1911, 6,100 in 1921, 8,993 in 1931, 4,685 in 1941, 4,685 in 1951 and 5,514 in 1961. It has been suggested that the Koras were not the autochthones of this State and that they migrated to this State from their original homeland in Bihar.[3] It has been surmised that the variation of Kora population is due mainly to migration rather than growth, the Koras being forced to infiltrate into the State because of economic hardship in their original homeland.[4] Probably an offshoot of the Munda Tribe, the name *Kora* signifies the occupation of earth-digging and hence it has been supposed that the term has been associated with sections of different tribes in different areas on their taking up

[1] ibid. p 111.
[2] ibid. p. 123.
[3] A. K. Das — The Koras and Some Little Known Communities of West Bengal. Calcutta, 1964. p. 13.
[4] ibid p. 14

the occupation of earth digging as the means of livelihood. Although they are expert earth workers, they also work as agriculturists in the district doing agricultural work as owner cultivators, share croppers or agricultural labourers. According to the census of 1961, out of 5,322 Koras living in rural areas, 5,101 were illiterate, 172 were literate (without educational level), 47 had primary or junior basic standard of education and 2 were matriculates or thereabout. In urban areas, out of 192 Koras, 175 were illiterate, 10 literate (without educational level) and 7 attaining education up to the primary or junior basic standard.

Muslims

According to the Census of 1961 Muslims number 3,99,513 (2,00,044 males and 1,99,469 females) in the district, of whom 3,88,152 belong to the rural areas and 11,361 to the urban. About 27.63 per cent of the district population are Muslims, who are most numerous in Murarai police station. Large numbers of Muslim population are also to be found in Nalhati and Ilambazar police stations. The percentage distribution[1] of the Muslims of the district in different police stations is as follows: Suri 18.98, Rajnagar 9.69, Mahammad Bazar 22.13, Sainthia 13.50, Dubrajpur 23.26, Khayrasol 15.85, Ilambazar 37.36, Bolpur 14.84, Labhpur 22.64, Nanur 26.39, Mayureswar 20.10, Rampurhat 29.02, Nalhati 45.67 and Murarai 59.07.

In 1951 they numbered 2,86,516 forming 26.86 per cent of the district population, and thus they have registered an increase of 39.44 per cent during the 1951-61 decade in the district. The Muslim population of the district mainly consists of Saikhs, Pathans, Saiyyids and Jolahas.

Saikhs

The word 'Saikh' means old or doctor in Muslim Law and theology. It is supposed that they themselves should achieve and train others in achieving spiritual progress. The word 'Saikh' has been added to the names of all the Sufis of Bengal, who, started teaching Islamic principles along with their mystic rites. The *Saikhs* played a prominent role in Bengal society in the middle ages by extending Muslim royal power to the State and by converting the local people to Islam. But the meaning of the term has changed and now signifies in some parts of this State the lower class Muslims, may be, converted ones.[2]

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[1] B Ray — Census 1961 : West Bengal District Census Handbook : Birbhum. Calcutta, 1966. p. 49.

[2] A. Karim — Social History of the Muslims of Bengal. (Down to A.D. 1538). Dacca, 1959. pp. 151-52.

Pathans

The term 'Pathan' is generally a substitute for the term 'Afghan', but the term gained currency after the overthrow of the Afghans from Delhi by the Mughals in A.D. 1526. The Afghans subsequently spread over Bengal and other parts of Eastern India until they were subjugated by the Mughals. Possibly from that time onward the pre-Mughal and non-Mughal Muslim population came to be called Pathans.[1]

The present day Pathans of the district may be a progeny of the selfsame Pathans of the earlier period.

Saiyyids

The Saiyyids are said to be the descendants of the Prophet and were looked upon with deep esteem by the common folk. Having the largest number in the district, they perhaps came to Bengal in different times doing various work. Although not belonging to any professional class as such, they are held in esteem 'because of their connexion with the family of the Prophet.'[2]

Jolahas

Jolahas belong to the professional class of weavers like the tailors, painters etc., who, however, form the lower class of society.[3]

Christians

According to the Census of 1961 Christians number 1,804 (1,196 males and 608 females) forming 0.12 per cent of the total population of the district. Of the Christians 544 males and 583 females belong to the urban areas. In 1951 they numbered 686 forming 0.06 per cent of the district population. Meagre though they are in numbers in absolute figures, they have recorded a growth of 162.97 per cent during the 1951-61 decade.

A mixed class: Jadupatuas

Jadupatuas, originally hailing from Manbhum and the Santal Parganas, are a class of people who are noted for displaying pictures of dead persons to the families concerned. Their main field of operation is among the tribals. To them they show the pictures of dead persons without the iris of the eyes, who are supposed to roam in the dark for want of eye-sight. They draw the iris on payment from the families concerned and thereby ensure smooth journey of the dead person to the other world. They occupy a place midway between Hindus and Muslims. They believe in Allah and also worship Kali, Manasa and various other Hindu deities. By profession they are, however, brass-workers making several kinds of brass wares.

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1 ibid. p. 155
2 ibid p. 130
3 ibid. p. 157.

Patuas

While Jadupatuas display *Yamapata* (picture of nether world), the Patuas or Chitrakars paint in miniature on cloth or paper or in scrolls, make earthen images, decorate walls with paints and engrave on walls in stucco (found only in Birbhum district). Their females make earthen dolls and toys or paint on ceremonial pottery (*Ghatachitra*) and wooden seats (*Pirichitra*). They follow Hindu manners and customs as also a few Muslim customs and their marriage takes place within their own society.

They are to be found at Balia (J. L. No. 4) and Ayas (J. L. No. 89) in Rampurhat police station, Pakurhans (J. L. No. 68) and Brahmandihi (J. L. No. 7) in Nanur police station, Panuria (J. L. No. 125) in Suri police station, Dadpur (J. L. No. 188) in Mayureswar police station, Danrka (J. L. No. 136) in Labhpur police station, Kalitha (J. L. No. 73) in Nalhati police station and Ahmadpur (J. L. No. 154) in Sainthia police station.

SOCIAL LIFE

Household

The Census of 1961 defined a house as a structure or part of a structure inhabited or vacant, or a dwelling, shop, a shop-cum-dwelling or a place of business, workshop, school etc. with a separate entrance. Commensality was considered to be the characteristic feature of a household or family.

In Birbhum district 5.2 persons on the average lived per household in 1961. In the rural and the urban areas the average numbers of persons per household were 5.2 and 5.2 respectively. The figures compare favourably well with the State averages of 5.3 for the entire State, 5.4 for the rural areas and 4.9 for the urban areas.

Joint family

It appears that joint family, that cherished institution of this part of the country, is still to be found in the district where the quantum of such families exceeds the State average. In 1961 there were 35 married females other than spouses or heads of families in 100 households of the district — married females other than the spouse or the head of the household signifying cohesion of families. In the rural and urban areas such married females numbered 36 and 33 respectively per 100 households in each sector. In 1951, however, they numbered 42 for the entire district, 42 for the rural sector and 44 for the urban sector per 100 households in each case. The declining numbers in 1961 only point to the comparative dwindling of joint families since 1951.

House types

In the rural areas of the district the houses are mostly mud-walled having thatched roofs. Such houses account for about 95 per cent of the rural houses in the district. The houses stand isolated from one another in the villages, have a central courtyard within, and the usual complement of a detached cowshed and out-houses. *Pucca* houses are not a very common sight in the rural areas, they can mostly be found in the urban areas.

In the rural areas 97 per cent of the people live in their own houses, while in the urban areas 63 per cent of the people live in their own houses, the rest living in rented houses.

Size of houses

Most of the people live in one-roomed houses in the district. In the rural areas 61 per cent of the total number of rural house-holds and in urban areas 57 per cent of the total number of urban households live in such houses. Two-roomed houses are occupied by 24 per cent of the total number of households in the rural areas and 25 per cent of the total number of households in the urban areas of the district. In the rural areas 6 per cent of the families and in the urban areas 9 per cent of the families live in three-roomed houses. In the urban areas, rather than in the rural areas, people have more rooms in their houses.

Composition of households

The following table based on a 20% sample would indicate the size of households in relation to persons occupying such households.

HOUSEHOLDS ON THE BASIS OF NO. OF MEMBERS (BASED ON 20% SAMPLE) IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961

	Total	*All rural areas*	*All urban areas*
1-member :			
Households	4,151	3.780	371
Males	1,680	1,430	250
Females	2,471	2,350	121
2-3 members :			
Households	12,026	11,143	883
Males	15,257	14,078	1,179
Females	15,345	14,283	1,062
4-6 members :			
Households	23,842	22,522	1,320
Males	59,482	56,142	3,340
Females	59,115	55,897	3,218

HOUSEHOLDS ON THE BASIS OF NO. OF MEMBERS (BASED ON 20% SAMPLE) IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961—(*Contd.*)

	Total	*All rural areas*	*All urban areas*
7-9 members :			
Households	10,597	9,911	686
Males	41,659	38,924	2,735
Females	39,940	37,357	2,583
10 members and above :			
Households	4,216	3,878	338
Males	26,496	24,306	2,190
Females	25,261	23,263	1,998

It appears from the foregoing table that households with 4-6 members are the most numerous (23,842) in the district, followed by nuclear families (12,026) of 2-3 members.

The composition of households may further be studied from the table in Appendix IV based on a 20% sample.

It appears from the table that males are generally the heads of households. Where the heads are females, they are probably widows inasmuch as male spouses of heads of households are insignificant in number (171). Unmarried males and females constitute a weighty component of the household. Unrelated persons, probably in the form of servants helping the agricultural work, are to be found in the rural areas in fair numbers.

Marriage

The Census of 1961 grouped persons below 10 years of age as not having married. The table[1] in Appendix V furnishes a picture of the marital status in the district in 1961.

[1] The table reveals that married status is mostly to be found in the age-groups, between 25-29 and 40-44.

APPENDIX I

AREA, HOUSES AND POPULATION ACCORDING TO CENSUS: 1961

Birbhum District	Area in sq mile (in sq. km.)	Population per sq mile (in sq. km.)	No. of inhabited villages & towns	No. of occupied residential houses	POPULATION			Female per 1000 males
					Total	Male	Female	
Total	1,743.0 (4,514.4)	830	...	3,42,128	14,46,158	7,32,922	7,13,236	973
Rural	1,725.4 (4,469.1)	780	2,234	3,22,592	13,45,389	6,78,275	6,67,114	948
Urban[1]	17.6 (45.3)	5,768	6	19,536	1,00,769	54,647	46,122	844

[1] Suri, Bolpur and Rampurhat towns only are Municipal towns. Dubrajpur and Nalhati are non-Municipal towns or over-grown villages.

APPENDIX II

AREA, HOUSES AND POPULATION OF TWO SUB-DIVISIONS : CENSUS 1961

Sub-division/tract	Area in sq. mile (in sq. km.)	Population per sq. mile (sq. km.)	No. of villages-towns inhabited	No. of occupied residential houses	Total persons	Males	Females	Females per 1000 males
Sadar Sub-division								
Total	1,136.9 (2,944.6)	760	...	2,04,029	8,64,299	4,39,130	4,25,169	968
Rural	1,123.9 (2,911.1)	705	1,516	1,89,736	7,92,090	4,00,015	3,92,075	980
Urban	13.0 (33.5)	5,585	4	14,293	72,209	39,115	33,094	846
Rampurhat Sub-division								
Total	606.1 (1,569.8)	960	...	1,38,099	5,81,859	2,93,792	2,88,067	981
Rural	601.5 (1,558.0)	920	718	1,32,856	5,53,299	2,78,260	2,75,039	988
Urban	4.6 (11.8)	6,291	2	5,243	28,560	15,532	13,028	839

APPENDIX III

Distribution of Select scheduled castes people in the Police Station : Birbhum District : 1961

Police Station	Bagdi	Bauri	Bhuimali	Bhuiya	Chamar of Muchi	Dhoba	Dom	Hari	Keot	Konai	Lohar	Mal	Namasudra	Pod	Rajbansi	Sunri
Suri	6513	4322			4768	566	4261	2555			524	2138				1064
Rajnagar	3571	3328			1581		1846					1578				1492
Mahammad Bazar	4170	2231			2022		2706	627				1234				1272
Sainthia	6111	2407			8324		4594	1591				2388	1724			1900
Dubrajpur	6986	8660			3163		5216	803				751				
Khayrasol	3976	9221			3626		3571									1489
Ilambazar	4185	2330			1474		1665	1864					730			
Bolpur	4933	2284			4151		4820	1307			1904	1059	1751			
Labhpur	9430	1558			6017		1757	1902	571							1057
Nanur	7723	1232			5452		2294	2706								1832
Mayureswar	17091	792	795		5991		2333	1357	957	1278		1021	786	1549		1112
Rampurhat	14250	2232		598	3506		2212			6397		14199	571	1321	771	1350
Nalhati	11756	558	718		2404		1324	650		4074		12052	717	4538		
Murarai	689	633	2392		4209					4779		12980	543	633	3846	12980

APPENDIX IV

HOUSEHOLDS ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIP (BASED ON 20% SAMPLE) IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1961

Composition of households

	Total No. of households	Total sample household population			Heads of households		Spouses of heads of households		Married Relations			Never married, widowed & divorced or separated relations		Unrelated persons	
		Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Sons	Other males	Other Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total	54,832	2,86,706	1,44,574	1,42,132	49,492	5,273	171	41,857	11,189	6,018	19,452	76,224	75,165	1,480	385
Rural	51,234	2,68,030	1,34,880	1,33,150	46,319	4,856	141	39,338	10,627	5,483	18,258	71,178	70,409	1,132	291
Urban	3,598	18,676	9,694	8,982	3,173	419	30	2,519	562	535	1,194	5,046	4,756	348	94

APPENDIX V

MARITAL STATUS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT—1961

		Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated	
All ages		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
	Rural	3,67,312	2,83,015	2,85,759	2,88,111	21,032	89,600	3,788	5,484
	Urban	30,948	20,968	22,044	19,788	1,428	5,085	144	281
0-9	R	2,28,871	2,28,832	—	—	—	—	—	—
	U	14,667	14,172	—	—	—	—	—	—
10-14	R	65,048	44,077	720	11,049	13	72	9	294
	U	5,627	4,210	17	409	1	—	—	1
15-19	R	41,991	8,319	7,439	42,485	89	513	202	1,034
	U	4,851	1,737	442	2,347	3	18	7	31
20-24	R	20,061	1,019	27,159	55,511	320	1,207	666	1,006
	U	3,052	577	2,328	3,719	14	70	14	38
25-29	R	6,432	234	47,991	52,181	742	2,703	879	895
	U	1,500	109	3,378	3,683	34	164	26	35
30-34	R	1,989	128	45,875	39,046	919	4,314	614	605
	U	497	26	3,938	2,934	74	252	24	34
35-39	R	999	53	38,662	28,880	1,167	6,026	410	423
	U	258	49	3,192	1,935	87	275	19	35
40-44	R	652	49	30,668	21,964	1,642	8,817	272	462
	U	222	13	2,705	1,825	124	468	10	35

MARITAL STATUS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT—1961 (*Contd.*)

All ages		Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
45-49	R	383	25	26,681	15,371	2,323	10,725	217	256
	U	106	31	1,845	1,274	193	541	13	22
50-54	R	274	37	22,096	10,821	2,930	14,257	162	191
	U	83	27	1,651	864	230	852	19	27
55-59	R	185	25	15,038	5,680	2,796	11,229	125	113
	U	40	3	1,106	346	140	710	6	11
60-64	R	120	21	11,989	3,104	3,139	13,070	112	105
	U	22	8	709	222	174	826	4	1
65-69	R	57	10	5,534	1,166	1,886	6,712	57	43
	U	14	1	330	131	160	404	1	8
70+	R	67	19	5,809	792	3,053	9,934	62	57
	U	9	5	401	79	194	505	1	3
Age not stated	R	183	167	98	61	13	21	1	—
	U	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—

APPENDIX

Table A*

Distribution of population, sex rates, growth rate and density of population in Birbhum District : 1951-71

Population 1971			Sex rates females per 1000 males		Density of population per sq km.		Decennial growth rate of population	
Persons	Males	Females	1961	1971	1961	1971	1951-61	1961-71
17,79,805	9,03,118	8,76,687	973	971	318	391	+35.55	+23.07

Table B*

Rural and Urban Composition of population in Birbhum District : 1961-71

Population 1971			Percentage of urban to total population		Decennial growth rate 1961-71		
Total	Rural	Urban	1961	1971	Total	Rural	Urban
17,79,805	16,54,567	1,25,238	7.0	7.04	+23.07	+22.98	+24.28

Table C*

Distribution of population by Workers in Birbhum District : 1961-71

	Total Population	Workers	Percentage of Workers to Total Population	
	1971		1961	1971
Persons	17,79,805	4,78,442	31.2	26.88
Males	9,03,118	4,38,789	52.4	48.59
Females	8,76,687	39,653	9.5	4.52

*From Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 1971, Paper I of 1971.

Table D**

Population of Police Stations of Birbhum District : 1971

	Total Population	Scheduled Caste Population	Scheduled Tribe Population
Birbhum District	17,75,909	5,32,697	1,25,250
Police Stations			
Murarai	1,74,107	40,671	5,579
Nalhati	1,70,937	52,687	6,021
Rampurhat	2,17,200	66,359	14,975
Mayureswar	1,60,063	50,406	9,896
Mahammad Bazar	80,109	23,401	14,514
Rajnagar	48,683	16,019	7,451
Khayrasol	89,583	30,658	1,434
Dubrajpur	1,16,887	38,707	5,615
Suri	1,31,502	41,083	10,884
Ilambazar	84,643	21,320	8,164
Sainthia	1,27,727	42,328	12,855
Bolpur	1,36,552	36,662	21,084
Labhpur	1,13,740	33,758	4,509
Nanur	1,24,176	38,638	2,269

**From Final Population Tables, Census of India 1971, Paper I of 1972.

TABLE E*

Population by Religious Groups

	Population			Hindus		Muslims	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total	17,75,909	9,02,441	8,73,468	6,37,765	6,15,322	2,62,384	2,55,997
Rural	16,51,137	8,37,543	8,14,594	5,81,835	5,65,425	2,53,056	2,47,533
Urban	1,24,772	65,898	58,874	55,960	49,897	9,328	8,464

* From Census of India 1971, Paper 2 of 1972 (Religion)

in Birbhum District : 1971

Christians		Sikhs		Buddhists		Jains		Other Religions & Persuasions		Religion not stated	
Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1,631	1,633	56	47	50	42	520	424	4	3	1	...
1,471	1,515	22	18	32	26	126	74	...	...	1	...
160	118	34	29	18	13	394	350	4	3	...	...

TABLE F*

Distribution of Working population by Agricultural and other Workers in Birbhum District : 1971

	Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Other Workers	Percentage of Agricultural and other Workers to total Workers					
					Cultivators		Agricultural Labourers		Other Workers	
					1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971
Persons	4,78,442	1,76,524	2,00,009	1,01,909	43.7	36.90	30.6	41.80	25.7	21.30
Males	4,38,789	1,71,850	1,75,888	91,051	47.0	39.16	28.8	40.09	24.2	20.75
Females	39,653	4,674	24,121	10,858	25.1	11.79	40.8	60.83	34.1	27.38

* From Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 1971, Paper I of 1971.

CHAPTER IV

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

LAND RECLAMATION AND UTILIZATION

Agriculture is the chief occupation of the people of the district, the majority of the working population being cultivators and agricultural labourers. According to Census 1961, the total number of workers of the district was 4,51,314, constituting 31.21 per cent of the total population of the district. Of those workers, again, the cultivators and agricultural labourers account for 13.63 per cent and 9.55 per cent of the total population respectively. It may be stated that every three out of any group of four workers are found to be in the agricultural sector either as a cultivator or as an agricultural labourer. On the whole, about 74 per cent of the total working population of the district are engaged in agriculture as against 54 per cent in the State of West Bengal. The total cultivable area of the district is 9,69,400 acres (4,55,244 hectares), while waste land including cultivable and unculturable waste comprises 71,256 acres (29,084 hectares). The area reserved for forests is about 28,744 acres. The total cultivable area under paddy is about 8,00,000 acres (3,26,531 hectares), while the area under crops other than paddy is 70,000 acres (28,572 hectares).

Cultivable waste

The statement given below shows the pattern of land utilization in the district in some selected years between 1947 and 1963.

LAND UTILISATION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT
(IN THOUSAND ACRES)

	1947-48	1952-53	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63
Total area of the district	1,115.3	1,115.5	1,115.5	1,115.5	1,115.5
Area under forests	—	—	9.9	9.9	12.7
Area not available for cultivation	141.9	191.1	175.4	175 4	173.2
Other cultivated land excluding current fallow	158.3	60.7	36.3	37.5	37.3
Current fallow	35.0	12.1	44.7	49.6	47.5
Net area sown	780.1	851.6	849.2	843.1	844.8
Area sown more than once	44.5	90.1	110.1	100.5	100.0
Total cropped area	824.6	941.6	959.3	943.6	944.8

The cultivable waste lying scattered in different areas can hardly be utilized profitably for extension of cultivation as they do not usually form any large blocks which can be easily brought under plough. Even the slightest progress in this respect cannot be made without considerable expenditure. The cultivators, however, are being given land improvement loans and land reclamation loans for reclaiming cultivable waste land in small pockets where it appears to be economical for the farmers.

Soil erosion

The problem of soil erosion in this district is being tackled jointly by the Departments of Forests and Agriculture and Community Development. Physiographically, the district can be divided into three broad zones. Along the western border of the Rampurhat sub-division there are some isolated abrupt hillocks. *Danga* lands are scanty, and wherever they can be found are wholly denuded. Whenever dry cultivation is attempted, the top soil is disturbed, leading to sheet erosion. Notwithstanding the attempts at cultivation, erosion has advanced and formed gullies. There are also some hillocks, generally surrounded on all sides by a stretch of high ground where cultivation is not attempted. The second zone comprises the extensive *danga* lands, generally along the western border of the district from Rampurhat police station southwards, extending to the east. In this zone, soil erosion is acute, the area of forests in this tract being only 50 square miles. The quantity of uncultivable land is maximum in this tract in the west of the district.

The adverse effect of soil erosion is evident from an analysis of the figures of land use and crop yield for the last few years. According to the settlement report of 1924-32, the total cultivated area of the district was 7,68,900 acres, the extent of cultivable lands including fallows was 1,61,398 acres and the area not available for cultivation was 1,85,194 acres. In 1946-47, the total cultivated area was 7,26,900 acres, the amount of cultivable land including fallows was 2,79,300 acres, and the extent of land not available for cultivation was 1,09,100 acres. These figures lead to the conclusion that during the period, both the cultivated area and the area not available for cultivation have decreased, while there is much more fallowing in recent years to enable the land to recuperate. This naturally leads to the conclusion that the land is progressively losing fertility. In 1871, the yield of paddy per acre was 28 maunds. In 1885, it was reported to be 22, while the yield per acre for 1924-32 was 18 according to the Settlement Report. In 1946-47, the yield was reported to be 16 maunds of

paddy. This is in spite of the fact that the area under *aman* has greatly increased and uneconomical lands were left out of cultivation.

Severe soil erosion, which is a great problem, has not yet been solved satisfactorily. The measures adopted in recent years by the State's Forest Department to halt the fearful soil erosion has been discussed separately under the section Forestry and need not be elaborated here. The State's Agriculture Department, on the other hand, has also made some progress lately in respect of contour bunding and gully-plugging as a measure to combat erosion. The progress made in this respect is shown in the statement below:[1]

PROGRESS OF SOIL CONSERVATION WORK IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1966-69

Year	Contour Bunding (*in acres*)	Gully Plugging (*in number*)
1966-67	364.14	9
1967-68	1573.17	28
1968-69	1886.77	10

IRRIGATION

The district, having for the most part, a porous soil and low water-holding capacity, irrigation facilities are of great importance. In the past, the district had to suffer occasionally for want of timely and adequate rainfall and owing to lack of irrigation facilities it faced the threat of crop failure. Before the implementation of the Mayurakshi Project, *bund* and tank irrigation were usually practised. During the rainy season, the cultivators would divide their fields into numerous little plots, each with a raised bank, to retain the rain water. Each plot was thus a small reservoir, and the lower fields could be irrigated by letting water into them from those at a higher level. In the pre-Independence days there were a few large-size tanks in the district for the purpose of irrigation but smaller tanks were more numerous. Well irrigation was not practised except in the case of garden produce, and tanks, large and small, were the usual source from which the fields could be watered.

[1] Source : Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

Old irrigation schemes

Up to August 1947, there were only one major irrigation and one minor irrigation scheme in the district. The major irrigation work was the Bakreswar Canal with a maximum discharge of 89.60 cusecs, the supply being drawn from the Bakreswar river. The length of the canal in 1953 was 23 miles and 1,915 feet including 4,515 feet of distributaries. The area to be irrigated under the scheme was 10,000 acres, the actual irrigated area during the period being 7,464 acres for *Kharif* and 38 acres for *Rabi*. This scheme was subsequently classed as unproductive. The Kashinala irrigation scheme, which was a minor scheme, was maintained by the Government. The canal with a length of about 3 miles and 1,564 feet in 1953 commanded an irrigated area of 1,367 acres for *Kharif* and 94 acres for *Rabi*. This scheme was classed as productive.[1] The following statement gives an idea of the net area irrigated as percentage to net area sown in the district for the period from 1947-48 to 1954-55.[2]

NET AREA IRRIGATED AS PERCENTAGE TO NET AREA SOWN IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1947-55

1947-48	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
42.0	41.4	65.6	65.0	69.5	45.4	44.6	48.6

It may be added that the whole picture of irrigation system has changed with the completion of the Mayurakshi Project. The entire cropped area of the district now may be broadly divided into five categories according to the principal sources of irrigation. While a good portion of the cropped area comes under the Mor or Mayurakshi River Project, there are other important irrigation schemes, such as river lift schemes, deep and shallow tubewell schemes and tank irrigation schemes, which account for supply of irrigation water in areas not covered by the Mor Project. The statement below shows the irrigation resources of the district at a glance during *Kharif* and *Rabi* seasons for the years 1966-67 and 1967-68.[3]

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[1] Census 1951 : District Hand Book : Birbhum, Calcutta, 1953. pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.
[2] S. N. Mukherjee — A brief Agricultural Geography of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1956, p. 47.
[3] Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

IRRIGATION RESOURCES OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1966–68

	1966-67 In *Kharif* season (*in acres*)	1967-68 In *Rabi* season (*in acres*)
Irrigated area Under Mor Project	3,59,039.00	40,000.00 (approx.)
Total area under tanks, *kandar* & small irrigation schemes etc.	16,779.00	2,022.00
Under shallow irrigation tube wells	3,500.00	3,500.00
Under minor irrigation schemes	1,200.00	300.00
Under river pump irrigation schemes	4,000.00	4,000.00

Irrigation facilities: rivers

The two important rivers which pass through the district are the Mayurakshi or *Mor* and the *Ajoy*. These rivers during the rainy season grow much broader and deeper, and after a heavy shower, rise quickly to a considerable height overtopping their banks and inundating the surrounding areas. In the dry weather their beds are broad expanses of sand with small streams trickling down the centre. The district is also drained by some other rivers and rivulets of which the Hingla, the Bakreswar, the Brahmani, the Dwarka and the Kopai may be mentioned. As the river system has been dealt with elaborately in Chapter I, we may only add here that much of the river system has been greatly affected by the operation of the Mor River Project.

Birbhum being almost wholly an *aman* growing area, the need for water is absolutely necessary. As *aman* crop depends solely upon water for its very existence from the time it comes out as a seedling till it attains its maturity, the demand for irrigation water, especially, at a time when there is erratic distribution of rainfall or insufficient rainfall, has always been considered very urgent. This is why the Mor or Mayurakshi Project with a command area of 853 square miles within the district and com-

prising the police stations of Murarai, Nalhati, Rampurhat, Mayureswar, Mahammad Bazar, Suri, Sainthia, Nanur, Labhpur, Ilambazar, Bolpur and Dubrajpur has come as a boon to the people. The project has been described elaborately in all its aspects in Chapter I and we need not repeat the same here. It may only be stated that though the main crop of the command area is *aman* paddy, some *aus* paddy is cultivated in the area in fields lying comparatively on a higher level, while *Rabi* crop has also been grown in a very small percentage of the command area.

Cropping pattern

The cropping pattern of the district did not change significantly until 1964-65, when it was possible to bring nearly 12,000 acres under double cropping in the command area. Prior to this, only 2,000 acres or so could be covered under double cropping. Since 1964-65, it has been possible for the Project authorities to assure irrigation for a larger area during *Rabi* season and the area under *Rabi* crop increased to about 6,800 acres in 1968-69. Regular cultivation of paddy in 3.5 lakhs acres with irrigation water was secured in 1968-69. The yield of paddy went up from 15-18 maunds to about 30 maunds per acre in the irrigated areas and consequently the district average increased to 18 to 25 maunds per acre.[1] Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that besides irrigated water, a continuous increase in the use of high yielding seeds, fertilisers and plant protection materials as part of new practices in intensive agricultural work was also responsible for this change in cropping pattern and higher yield. In order to derive full benefits under the Project it has been considered necessary to arrange facilities for utilization of irrigation potential by the lift irrigation devices either from the rivers, *Kandar* or from Mor canals. Non-availability of irrigation facilities from the Mor Project to the lands in higher situations is another problem which is yet to be solved satisfactorily.

It has already been indicated that paddy is the most important crop of the district and almost the whole of it is grown in the *Kharif* season. Growing of paddy in the *Rabi* season is still in an initial stage and its popularity depends solely on the availability of irrigation water. The importance of other crops does not seem to be very significant if the acreage for the individual crop is taken into consideration. The number of crops other than paddy is also very limited for the *Kharif* season. Generally,

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[1] Source : Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

sugarcane, arum and ginger are grown in the *Kharif* season and their total acreage is not very high. In *Rabi* season, wheat, pulses, oil seeds and vegetables of different varieties are grown on a limited scale.

In the first year of the programme, the area covered for paddy was 500 acres while for 1967-68 and 1968-69 the area covered were 30,000 acres and 1,20,000 acres respectively. The area covered for wheat during the first year was 25,000 acres while the same for the second and third year, i.e., 1967-68 and 1968-69 was 34,000 acres and 70,000 acres respectively.[1]

Sources of irrigation

The various irrigation projects in the district may be classified into (i) river lift irrigation, (ii) river valley project, (iii) deep tubewells, (iv) minor irrigation, (v) small irrigation, (vi) shallow irrigation schemes and (vii) tank irrigation.

The following statement shows the total irrigated area for the years 1967-68 and 1968-69 during *Rabi* and *Kharif* seasons.

SOURCES OF IRRITATION AND TOTAL AREA IRRIGATED IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1967-69

Sources of irrigation	Total area irrigated in 1967-68 (in acres)		Total area irrigated in 1968-69 (in acres)	
	Rabi	*Kharif*	*Rabi*	*Kharif*
River Lift Irrigation	810.69	585.00	800	900
River Valley Project	45,325	3,61,000	50,000	3,65,000
Deep Tubewells	54.04	54.66	138.60	114.40
Minor Irrigation Schemes	200	400	200	500
Small Irrigation Schemes	217	780	412	1,500
Shallow Tubewells	970	650	930	1,120
Tanks & Other local reserve water by use of pumping plants	1,485	2,370	2,337	2,370

Tank Irrigation

The West Bengal Tank Improvement Act was implemented during the various Plan periods to derive the following benefits: (i) increase in the annual production of paddy, (ii) reclamation of cultivable waste lands, (iii) increase in the yield of winter crops, (iv) pisciculture and (v) production of vegetables. Accord-

[1] Source : Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

ing to the Settlement Report of 1931, there existed more than 10,000 tanks in the district of which almost 90 per cent were derelict. After independence, these tanks were taken up for development during the various Plan periods. The number of tanks improved or developed during the First, Second and Third Plans with year-wise break-up for each Plan period, showing the cost of improvement and benefited area is given below:[1]

FIRST PLAN PERIOD

Year	No. of tanks improved	Cost involved (in rupees)	Benefited area (in acres)
1951	77	1,09,023.50	3,080.70
1952	24	52,144.00	2,078.68
1953	52	1,70,079.31	2,043.48
1954	55	1,50,000.00	1,678.54
1955	12	59,557.00	276.62
Total	220	5,40,803.81	9,158.02

SECOND PLAN PERIOD

Year	No. of tanks improved	Cost involved (in rupees)	Benefited area (in acres)
1956	33	71,321.81	881.14
1957	39	67,416.00	958.94
1958	14	56,863.35	403.33
1959	23	51,320.11	636.73
1960	9	31,100.00	362.00
Total	118	2,78,021.27	3,242.14

[1] Source: Tank Improvement Officer, Birbhum.

THIRD PLAN PERIOD

Year	No. of tanks improved	Cost involved (in rupees)	Benefited area (in acres)
1961	10	25,000.00	232.75
1962	30	50,000.00	813.74
1963	25	49,627.00	756.50
1964	23	63,000.00	522.06
1965	21	80,000.00	531.51
Total	109	2,67,627.00	2,856.56

The object of improvement of the tanks was mainly to provide irrigation water in areas where there were no other sources of irrigation. In 1966-67, 11 tanks were improved in the Block areas, while in later years it was decided by the Government that henceforth tanks should be improved by the Panchayats concerned.

AGRICULTURE & HORTICULTURE

Soil and crops

On the whole, the surface of the district is undulating and irregular, the trend of such undulations is from north-east to south-east. 'The soil of the district is mostly covered with laterite nodules. Granite veins can also be seen to traverse the district, at places running up on the surface for hundreds of acres in bleak barren plateaus still unyielded to human efforts to cover it under tillage.'[1] The soil of the south eastern part of the district is alluvial with dark clay or clay and sand, while the soil of the western portion is mostly laterite as has already been stated.

The various types of soils as observed in the district and their suitability for growing different crops are described below.

Entel, which literally means sticky, a brownish clay, is a very poor soil. It becomes very sticky when wet, and gets hard and cracks in long fissures on drying. It can grow rice if manured, but is not suitable for *Rabi* cultivation. *Metel* is a clay soil which can retain moisture and is best suited for *aman* rice, sugar-

[1] District Census Handbook: Birbhum, 1961. p. 9.

cane, wheat, gram and *kalai*. *Bagha-entel* is a heavy reddish soil which becomes very sticky when wet and extremely hard when dry. It can retain moisture for a longer period than any other soil. Like *entel* it is also a poor soil and capable of producing paddy only if manured. *Palimati* is alluvial deposition. It is a very rich soil and is well suited for sugarcane, wheat, gram, potato, cabbage and other vegetables. With assured irrigation water it can produce *Rabi* crops in abundance. *Bindi* is a sandy soil which improves with continued cultivation. It is reddish, loose and friable with very little water-holding capacity. It is capable of producing paddy and can produce *Rabi* crops with irrigation. *Doansh* is a mixture of clay and sand, forming a blackish, loose and friable soil. It is not so rich in fertility but can grow rice and also suitable for almost all sorts of crops. It is not ordinarily suited for *Rabi* cultivation. *Kankar* is a reddish, loose and friable laterite soil containing ferroginous concretions in it. It is a poor type of soil, capable of growing *bajra*, maize, peas, etc. It will also grow *Rabi* crops with irrigation. *Bele* is a whitish, loose and friable soil, not retentive of moisture. It is a poor soil suited only for paddy and vegetables. *Bastu*, a rich blackish soil with low water holding capacity, can grow fine rice, wheat, sugarcane, peas, tobacco, etc. with proper manuring and irrigation.

Major and subsidiary crops

Paddy is the most important crop of the district accounting for about 80 per cent of the total cultivated area. Birbhum is mainly an *aman* paddy producing area and while one-tenth of the cropped area gives other food grains, jute and other cash crops are not generally cultivated on a wider scale in this district. The cultivation of paddy being the most important, an account of the process followed is given below.

Mode of cultivation of *aus* and *aman* Paddy

The *aman* or winter rice is the most important crop and the bulk of the cultivable land of the district is reserved for the cultivation of this crop. This variety is richer and requires greater attention from the cultivators. The numerous *bunds* which are found in the fields exhibit the urgent need to hold water for this crop. The ploughing of the land starts with the first shower at the end of winter. As *aman* paddy is chiefly grown by transplantation, the preparation of the seedlings is an important factor in the cultivation of this crop. Generally, a rectangular piece of land is ploughed up repeatedly in the months of March and April (*Chaitra* and *Baisakh* of the Bengali Calendar) and every little root of wild growth is turned upside

down and exposed to the heat of the sun. Sometimes, the collected roots and shrubs are burnt and the ashes go back to the land. The land is then pressed with a ladder so that it settles down hard, else a loose soil permits the roots to go deep and make it difficult for the cultivators to take out when seedlings are needed to be transplanted. The selected seeds are then sown and arrangements are made for good supply of water. Generally, the seedling ought to grow to a height of nine inches to a foot before they are transplanted. An acre of seed beds needs between thirty seers to a maund of seeds, while the seedlings grown on an acre can be transplanted to about thirty acres of area.

The transplantation generally starts by the end of June and continues to the middle of July—a period when the cultivators are expected to put in the hardest labour. Completion of transplantation before the end of *ashar* is considered to be the best. The full monsoon which usually follows this period yields the best results to the transplanted paddy. In case of late rains, the cultivators are put to various devices for supply of water. If the rains be seasonal, the seedlings grow in number after transplantation. Normally, by the end of September-October, the paddy is in flower and within a fortnight to three weeks, the harvesting starts.

The *aus* paddy is easier to grow and normally provides a second chance for another crop. There are two varieties of this rice, the local names being *chotna* and *baran*. *Aus* is often grown after *Rabi* is harvested, but it grows better after the land is left fallow to recuperate for four months. After the first shower of rain, the land is ploughed up during February and March and besides ploughing, some cultivators use the spade and the hammer to break up the clods of earth. Deep furrowing is not essential and depth of six to nine inches is considered sufficient. *Aus* is generally sown broadcast but occasionally it is also transplanted. While the season for sowing varies with the rains, the sowing is normally completed between the middle of May and the end of June. Under normal conditions, the seedlings come out just above the earth within a period of four to six days and the blade shoots forth a day or two later. In ten or twelve days, the plants grow to the size of about nine inches. The field then requires weeding and care is to be taken to keep the land free from weeds. Harvesting is started between 90 to 120 days from the date the seeds are thrown. The *aus*

rice is not liked by the wealthier section of people as it is of a inferior quality while the poorer people take to it with reluctance and reject it whenever they have the option.

The following statement gives the distribution of the crops in the district for the year 1960-61.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS CROPS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1960-61[1]

	Area (in acres)
Total Rice	7,66,767
(a) *Aman*	6,77,562
(b) *Aus*	85,745
(c) *Boro*	3,460
Wheat	13,838
Barley	1,236
Jawar	247
Bazra	247
Maize	1,483
Gram	27,429
Other food grains	93,159
Sugarcane	17,297
Rape and mustard	988
Til or Sesamum	247
Linseed	5,189
Condiments and spices	741
Jute	494
Fruits and vegetables (including root crops)	26,687

The cropped area of a district does not remain constant over years. It varies according to changes in weather condition and other agro-economic features. The statement below gives an idea of the percentage of area under certain important crops to the total cropped area of the district for a certain number of years.

[1] Source: District Census Hand Book: Birbhum: 1961. p. 93.

PERCENTAGE OF AREA UNDER CERTAIN IMPORTANT CROPS TO TOTAL CROPPED AREA IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1951-61.[1]

(area in '000 acres)

Name of crop	*1951-52*	*1956-57*	*1960-61*
Total Rice	93.00	85.49	79.89
(a) *Aus*	8.78	13.18	8.93
(b) *Aman*	84.19	72.28	70.60
(c) *Boro*	—	0.03	0.36
Wheat	2.10	2.17	1.44
Maize	0.29	0.24	0.15
Gram	3.29	2.45	2.86
Other foodgrains	N.A.	4.70	9.71
Sugarcane	0.65	1.17	1.80
Linseed	0.19	0.54	0.54
Fruits and Vegetables	N.A.	2.20	2.78

It has been already stated that with the implementation of the Mayurakshi Project, there has been a great change in the production of crops in the irrigated area. The statement below shows the irrigated area of the district under principal crops and percentage thereof for the period from 1951-52 to 1965-66[3].

IRIGATED AREA (IN HECTARES) UNDER DIFFERENT CROPS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT & PERCENTAGE THEREOF: 1951-66[2]

	Name of crops			
Year	*Rice*	*Jute*	*Sugarcane*	*Potato*
1951-52	20,000(6%)	100(50%)	1,050(50%)	3,300(100%)
1952-53	20,000(6%)	100(50%)	1,500(50%)	3,900(100%)
1953-54	20,000(6%)	100(50%)	1,500(50%)	3,450(100%)
1954-55	50,000(15%)	100(50%)	1,550(50%)	3,550(100%)
1955-56	75,000(23%)	100(50%)	1,755(50%)	3,450(100%)
1956-57	86,700(27%)	100(50%)	2,580(60%)	3,180(100%)
1957-58	1,24,720(40%)	183(75%)	2,170(75%)	4,000(100%)
1958-59	1,36,840(42%)	123(100%)	2,170(75%)	4,300(100%)
1959-60	1,48,000(45%)	228(80%)	2,775(75%)	5,200(100%)
1960-61	1,50,000(46%)	164(100%)	5,250(75%)	5,630(100%)
1961-62	1,56,163(48%)	265(50%)	3,075(75%)	4,800(100%)
1962-63	1,60,000(49%)	245(98%)	3,225(75%)	4,400(100%)
1963-64	1,62,700(50%)	230(80%)	3,375(75%)	6,020(100%)
1964-65	1,64,245 (50.35%)	123(100%)	3,656(80%)	5,180(100%)
1965-66	1,65,600 (50.72%)	82(100%)	3,150(80%)	6,860(100%)

[1] Source: District Census Handbook: Birbhum, 1961. p. 93.
[2] Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.
[3] Figures inside brackets indicate percentages of total area under the crops.

From the given statement it may be seen that there has been a gradual expansion of irrigated area since 1957-58 owing to other sources of irrigation, besides project operation. Since 1965-66, the area under *rabi* crop has gone up significantly and with the introduction of the High Yielding Variety Programme during 1966-67 the agriculture of the district has entered a new phase of intensive cultivation. This aspect has been dealt with in details under a separate section where the progress of scientific agriculture has been discussed.

The varieties of paddy are large. The Settlement Report of 1924-1932 has indicated 135 varieties of which *ramsal, raghusal, bankchura* are liked by the elites. In recent years, however, the principal varieties found in the district are *ramsal, kalma, dudkalma, patnai, raghusal, bhasamanik, sindurmukh* and *kalamkati* of which about 45 per cent come under *bhasamanik*, and 40 percent under *kalamkati*.

Fruits & Vegetables

Fruits grown in the district do not deserve any special mention. The mangoes have no reputation; the jack fruits, the blackberries are found, but have little distinction. The only important fruit tree that attracts attention is the *palmyra palm*—its fruits, raw and ripe, are much in use and occasionally its juice is boiled to sugar crystals or is made into candy.

It has already been stated that rice is the main food crop of the district and occupies about 80 per cent of the net cropped area. The following table would give an idea of the volume of production of the principal crop in relation to other important food and non-food crops of the district between 1961-62 and 1965-66.

NET CROPPED AREA UNDER PRINCIPAL CROPS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1961-66.[1]

(*in thousand hectares*)

Year	*Total Rice*	*Wheat*	*Total oil seeds*	*Total pulses*	*Sugar-cane*	*Potato*
1961-62	310.82	7.06	3.36	45.41	4.10	4.80
1962-63	313.70	7.70	3.11	42.45	4.45	4.40
1963-64	305.47	10.70	3.67	44.50	4.57	5.18
1964-65	317.40	N.A.	3.30	45.70	4.57	5.18
1965-66	309.03	N.A.	3.10	45.78	3.92	N.A.

[1] Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

Sugarcane

Sugarcane is an important cash crop of the district. In the past, disposal of sugarcane was a problem in this district and 80 per cent of the crop was used for preparation of *gur*. In recent years, with the establishment of one sugar mill at Ahmadpur, the scope for proper utilization of the sugarcane has greatly increased. During the year 1960-61, 7,86,000 maunds of sugarcane were crushed, out of which 90,947 maunds of sugarcane were procured from Bihar. Owing to certain difficulties, the mill is at present closed.[1]

The table[2] below would indicate the total cropped area, the yield per acre and the total production of principal crops of the district over the five-year period from 1962-63 to 1966-67:

Year	*Name of Crop*	*Cropped (in thousand acres)*	*Yield per acre (in maunds)*	*Total production (in thousand tons)*
1962-63	*Aman* Rice	698.1	14.30	366.7
	Aus Rice	69.0	12.43	31.5
	Potato	10.8	78.06	31.0
	Jute	0.6	3.02 (A)	1.8*
	Sugarcane	10.6	417.81	162.7
	Wheat	18.9	5.85	4.1
1963-64	*Aman* Rice	661.7	15.66	380.7
	Aus Rice	86.0	12.23	38.6
	Potato	12.3	82.66	37.4
	Jute	0.7	2.90	2.0
	Sugarcane	11.1	509.42	207.7
	Wheat	26.2	4.42	4.3
1964-65	*Aman* Rice	694.8	15.65	399.5
	Aus Rice	81.8	13.53	40.7
	Potato	12.7	108.13	50.4
	Jute	0.3	3.39	1.0
	Sugarcane	11.2	414.77	170.7
	Wheat	18.9	5.84	4.1

[1] For details, please see Chapter V on *Industries*.
[2] Source: Agricultural Economist, Socio-Economic & Evaluation Branch, Department of Agriculture & Community Development, West Bengal.
(A)=Production of Jute is given in '000 bales (1 bale=400 lbs).
(*)=Yield rate of Jute is given in bales/acre (1 bale=400 lbs).

Year	Name of Crop	Cropped (in thousand acres)	Yield per acre (in maunds)	Total production (in thousand tons)
1965-66	*Aman* Rice	684.0	15.43	387.7
	Aus Rice	66.7	15.61	38.3
	Potato	16.8	98.14	58.1
	Jute	0.2	2.24	0.4
	Sugarcane	9.6	499.67	176.2
	Wheat	18.7	11.09	7.6
1966-67	*Aman* Rice	713.5	16.38	429.4
	Aus Rice	76.2	13.65	38.2
	Potato	14.0	85.54	44.0
	Jute	0.2	1.90	0.4
	Sugarcane	7.7	389.77	110.3
	Wheat	29.6	8.29	9.0

PROGRESS OF SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE

The older types of implements are still in general use in the district. Ploughs of the indigenous type constitute the main animal-drawn agricultural implement, while spades, pick-axes and sickles are also used. These simple implements are made in the villages by the village blacksmiths and carpenters and are also repaired by them when required. In recent years efforts were made to acquaint the cultivators with the use of new types of improved agricultural implements which play an important part in increasing the production of crops. Provisions were also made to distribute improved agricultural implements like paddy-weeders, wheel-hoes, seed-drills and mould-board ploughs at a subsidy of 50 per cent of the cost. The progress, however, in this respect is still limited as the cultivators are very poor and often borrow their tools and implements from their neighbours. The repair of improved type of implements was also a problem to the farmers as they could hardly arrange for the spare parts. This difficulty has been overcome through the posting of a mechanic at each Block office for attending all repair works on receipt of requisitions from the cultivators. The following statement shows the distribution of improved implements in the district for the year 1967-68.

DISTRIBUTION OF IMPROVED IMPLEMENTS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1967-68[1]

Distribution of improved implements

Type of implement	*Total Quantity distributed*
Mould-board plough	53
Paddy-weeder	16
Wheel-hoe	10
Seed-drill	8

Intensive Agricultural Area Programme

Birbhum was one of the nine districts in West Bengal where the Intensive Agricultural Area Programme was launched in 1964-65 with the object of arranging intensive cultivation in selected areas. For proper implementation of the scheme, the district-level organization of the Agricultural Department was strengthened by the appointment of three subject matter specialists, one for agricultural information and two for agronomy and plant protection work, besides the Project Executive Officer (later designated as Principal Agricultural Officer) holding charge of the district office.

In 1964-65, the Blocks covered by the Intensive Rice Cultivation Area Programme were Suri-I, Suri-II, Mahammad Bazar, Sainthia, Bolpur, Ilambazar, Labhpur, Nanur, Dubrajpur, Rampurhat-I, Rampurhat-II, Mayureswar-I, Mayureswar-II, Nalhati-I, Nalhati-II and Murarai-II. The implementation of the programme, however, was not very successful due to adverse weather conditions, the crop being completely damaged by heavy thunder showers at the optimum time of sowing.

High-yielding varieties Programme

In 1967-68, the Intensive Agricultural Area Programme was followed by another Programme known as the High-yielding Varieties Programme and the district was assigned a place of importance among the districts in West Bengal. The district of Birbhum being admirably suited for the cultivation of paddy due to its favourable soil and climate conditions, the new Programme was given a fair trial. In respect of the area put to high yielding variety, this district came to a close second just after Burdwan accounting for almost one-fifth of the total area under the variety in West Bengal. The district, falling within the Intensive Agricultural Area Programme, had already built up an organisation which could be utilized effectively at this stage. Above all, was

[1] Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

the advantage due to assured irrigation facilities provided by the Mayurakshi Project. The target for the district was fixed on the basis of the available resources and the area agreed to by the district authorities. The area to be covered by the high yielding variety in 1966-67 was 13,860 acres of which 1,860 acres were for *Kharif* season and the remaining 12,000 acres for *Rabi* season. The area under the Programme accounted for nearly one-fifth of the total area of the State for the year 1966-67.

Paddy being the principal crop of the district, accounting for nearly 80 per cent of the total cultivated area, it was only natural that emphasis would be laid on increasing the yield of paddy through the exotic varieties of seed and other improved practices. Some improved varieties, such as, Kalimpong-I, N. C. 678 and N. C. 1281 were already popular among the cultivators and the High-yielding variety Programme was actually introduced in the district from the *rabi* season of 1965-66 covering an area of fifty acres with the sole object of demonstration, so that in the next year the farmers would come forward to grow the new varieties with confidence and courage. The following table gives an idea of the target and achievement of High-yielding variety crop in the district.[1]

TARGET AND ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGH-YIELDING VARIETY CROP IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT FOR THE *KHARIF* SEASON : 1967-78

	TARGET		ACHIEVEMENT		*Percentage of*
Variety	*Area (in acres)*	*% of total*	*Area (in acres)*	*% of total*	*Col. 4 to Col. 2*
Taichung Native-1	18,400.00	36.80	4,258.24	15.13	23.14
Taichung-65	7,500.00	15.00	2,299.36	8.17	30.66
Tainan-3	1,100.00	2.20	690.05	2.45	62.73
Kalimpong-1	3,400.00	6.80	1,329.94	4.73	39.12
I. R.-8	12,900.00	25.80	2,409.00	8.56	18.67
N. C. 1281	1,400.00	2.80	3,724.36	13.24	266.03
N. C. 678	5,300.00	10.60	13,426.37	47.72	253.33
Total	50,000.00	100.00	28,137.32	100.00	56.27

The target and achievement of High-yielding variety crop for the *rabi* season of the same year is also given below:

[1] Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

Wheat	14,600.00	100.00	15,303.00	100.00	104.82
Paddy	2,620.00	100.00	1,825.00	100.00	69.68

It may be pointed out that the newly introduced Formosan varieties, such as, Taichung Native 1, Taichung 65, Tainan 3 and I. R.-8 could achieve only moderate success accounting for only 19 per cent to 63 per cent of their targets, while the other varieties which were introduced a few years earlier had exceeded the targets by a considerable margin. This achievement of the early varieties could be attributed to their popularity among the cultivators which again was largely due to the high yield of the varieties and their early introduction in this area.[1]

Seed Procurement

The Principal Agricultural Officer of the district is in charge of the seed procurement through the Block Offices and mainly through the Village Level Workers. The two sources of seed procurement are the Government agricultural farms and the cultivators participating in the scheme. The total quantity of seed procured during the year 1966-67 for the district as a whole is shown in the table below.

SEED PROCUREMENT FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES ACCORDING TO VARIETIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1966-67

	Government farms		*Cultivators*		
Kind of seed	*Quantity (in Quintals)*	*Per-centage*	*Quantity (in Quintals)*	*Per-centage*	*Quantity (in Quintals) Total*
Taichung Native	1,506.75	52.75	1,349.83	47.25	2,856.58
Taichung—65	771.10	69.65	335.93	30.35	1,107.03
Tainan—3	140.61	42.72	188.52	57.28	329.13
Kalimpong—1	342.35	65.95	176.79	34.05	519.14
N. C. 1281	207.25	23.61	670.50	76.39	877.75
N. C. 678	174.05	26.99	470.85	73.01	644.90
Formosan	14.26	100.00	—	—	14.26
Kalimpong—2	1.50	100.00	—	—	1.50
Others	479.83	78.17	134.00	21.83	613.83
Total	3,637.70	52.23	3,326.42	47.77	6,964.12

[1] Source: A Study of High yielding varieties Programme in the District of Birbhum, West Bengal with reference to *Kharif* Paddy, 1967-68, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, March, 1968.

Distribution of seed

The main responsibility of Seed distribution lies with the Principal Agricultural Officer of the district and he sends the required quantity of seeds to the Block Development Officers for storage and subsequent distribution to the participant farmers. The improved seeds are treated with proper chemicals before these are sold to the cultivators through the Village Level Workers. The cultivators being very poor can hardly purchase the seed on cash payment and this is why in most cases the seed is sold to them by the Village Level Workers on credit, the responsibility for collecting the money after the harvest lying solely on the Village Level Workers. It may be added that despite the risk involved in the procedure the system is still working quite efficiently. The following statement gives an idea of the supply and distribution of seeds in the district for the years 1967-68 and 1968-69.[1]

Kind of Seed	*Classification*	*Total quantity distributed*	
		1967-68	*1968-69*
Paddy	High yielding variety	315-3-29 KG	559-7-27 KG
	Improved variety	Nil	50 KG
Wheat	High yielding variety	405-2-49 KG	149-1-46 KG
	Improved variety	Nil	13-6-60 KG
Total Oilseeds		145.25 Qntls.	43.50 Qntls.
Total pulseseeds		28.27 ,,	2125 KG

The acreage under paddy and wheat increased to a large extent in 1968-69 chiefly owing to the use of high yielding variety seed. In 1967-68, the total area under paddy was 30,000 acres and this acreage was increased to 1,20,000 acres in 1968-69. The area for wheat was also increased from 34,000 acres in 1967-68 to 72,000 acres in 1968-69 indicating a sharp rise in wheat production of the district.[2]

Use of fertiliser

As the new varieties of seeds respond well to heavy fertilization, it is essential that the fertilizer should be made available to the farmers at the right moment and in right doses without any difficulty. In order to ensure this, loan is sanctioned for purchasing fertilizer on usual terms and conditions. The fertilizer

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1.2 Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

is stored in the village by the Village Level Workers from where the cultivators receive their required quantities in adequate doses and in proper time. It may be added that the consumption of fertilizers is on the increase from year to year since the beginning of the High-yielding variety programme. The distribution of manure and fertilizer in the district for all the crops from 1964-68 is shown in the following table.

MANURES AND FERTILIZERS DISTRIBUTION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1964-68 (In Metric Tons)[1]

Year	*Green Manure (Dhaincha)*	*Town Compost*	*Ammonium Sulphate*	*Urea*	*Paddy Mixture*	*Phosphate*	*Potata Mixture*	*Di. Am. Phosphate*
1964-65	127	1,308	4,950	298	6,000	165	4,000	—
1965-66	140	1,500	10,000	350	1,000	500	7,750	--
1966-67	—	1,330	5,179	1,110	7,872	420	4,743	—
1967-68	—	1,200	7,052	2,052	—	1,193	—	12,200

In 1967-68, besides the new fertilizer Di-Ammonium Phosphate shown in the table above, another new fertilizer, namely, Potash has also made its first appearance, the consumption of the latter in this year being 85 Metric tons. While these two new fertilizers have given a fair trial in 1967-68, the use of paddy and potato mixtures has been discontinued. In any case, during the period under reference there was no dearth of fertilizers in the district and the supply was all alone quite satisfactory.

Role of Co-operatives

Normally, a cultivator gets an advance credit of Rs. 150.00 per acre of non-irrigated land and Rs. 200.00 per acre of irrigated land from the societies. The credit from Co-operative societies has got this advantage that there is no limit to such loans provided the borrower becomes a member of the society and purchases the requisite shares. For the high yielding variety paddy, however, the credit amount has been raised to Rs. 290.00 per acre of which Rs. 140.00 must be taken in fertilizer and the rest in cash. The existing societies are mostly of recent origin and are affiliated with the District Central Co-operative Bank which advances loans to the societies to the extent of 15 times of their share capital. The societies usually advance short term loans on existing terms and conditions and mid term loans are

[1] Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum.

granted only in very exceptional cases. Short term loans are sanctioned mainly to meet the cultivation expenses and in such cases, 80 per cent of the loan is paid in cash while the rest 20 per cent in fertilizer to be collected from the thana marketing societies. The following statement shows the number of service co-operatives of the district (with Blockwise break up) handling agricultural requisites for the year 1967-68.

SERVICE CO-OPERATIVES OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT (WITH BLOCK-WISE BREAK UP) HANDLING AGRICULTURAL REQUISITES: 1967-68

Name of Dev. Block	*Number of Service Co-operatives*	*Quantity of agril. requisites handled*
		Rs.
Suri I	19	2,32,363
Suri II	24	81,462
Dubrajpur	39	5,708
Rajnagar	12	14,828
Khayrasol	9	—
Ilambazar	20	9,146
Bolpur-Sriniketan	28	60,935
Sainthia	37	64,329
Nanur	23	33,197
Labhpur	27	—
Mayureswar I	18	34,000
Mayureswar II	11	59,810
Murarai I	21	69,540
Murarai II	32	25,148
Nalhati I	30	—
Nalhati II	27	—
Rampurhat I	29	40,000
Rampurhat II	18	41,200
Mahammad Bazar	41	45,686

Both short term and mid term loans were received by the working co-operatives of the district from the Central Co-operative Bank in recent years. The extent of loan received by the Co-operatives between 1964-65 and 1967-68 is shown in the following statement.[1]

[1] Source: District Auditor, Co-operative Societies, Birbhum.

Type of loan	(In rupees) 1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
Short term	33,60,381	24,61,083	64,69,193	60,45,583
Mid term	2,39,059	1,16,575	2,87,556	4,42,118

In 1967-68, there were as many as 909 service societies in the district with a total membership of 55,025 persons covering 22 per cent of the agricultural population. During the same period 14 Large Size Marketing Societies were also functioning in the district, the largest of these being the Murarai Thana Large-scale Agricultural Marketing Society Ltd. located at Murarai village handling agricultural commodities worth about 8,67,523 rupees. The second and the third societies in this respect were the Suri Thana Co-operative Agricultural Marketing Society located in Purandarpur village and Nalhati Thana Co-operative Marketing Society located in Nalhati village, handling commodities worth Rs. 7,18,356 and Rs. 6,50,072 respectively.

Agricultural diseases and pests

The Agricultural diseases and pests affecting the crops are the same as found in other parts of this State. Grass hopper, Stem borer, Rice bug and Rice Hipsa are the insect pests which destroy paddy, while Jute Semi-looper, Indigo caterpillar, Jute mite, etc. cause harm to jute. Sugarcane is affected by the pests known as Sugarcane top shoot borer, Sugarcane stem borer and Root borer. Vegetables are usually attacked by a number of insects of which Stem borer, Leaf folder, Cut worm, Lady bird beetles, Mole cricket, Cabbage moth and Diamond black moth may be mentioned. In the case of paddy, jute and sugarcane, the diseases are leaf spot, stem rot and red rot respectively. The growers in the villages are not yet very keen about the use of insecticides and pesticides though they are gradually becoming conscious of these scientific remedies. Of the pesticides sold during 1967-68, mention may be made of D.D.T. 50%, B.H.C. 50%, Blitox, B.H.C. 20 E.C., Endrin 20 E.C. and Agresen G.N. which are becoming gradually popular. The Demonstration Centres scattered over different Development Blocks offer the cultivators good scope for knowing the uses of these insecticides and pesticides.

ACTIVITIES OF THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

The Activities of the Agriculture Department may be briefly stated here. There is one State Agricultural Farm located at Ṣuri which is perhaps one of the oldest farms in the State having

Farms

its origin in the prepartition days. This is primarily a research farm where agronomical trials and experiments, namely, on rice crop, are conducted. The District Seed Farm at Nalhati with an area of 99 acres is one of the big farms started during the post-Independence period. The farm was started in 1955-56 under the programme of multiplication of improved seeds. At present, this farm is chiefly engaged in the multiplication and production of improved seed, mainly of paddy and wheat. In addition, the cultivators on the improved method of raising crops. The farm also serves the object of demonstration to the neighbouring Japanese Model Farm located at Ahmadpur with an area of 25 acres is one of the ten farms set up in recent years in the model of Japanese farm. Starting in 1966-67, the present activities of this farm consist in the multiplication of improved seeds like paddy and wheat. The main object of this farm is to undertake and intensify cultivation of crops all round the year with the application of improved technique for achieving maximum yield of various crops. High-yielding varieties of paddy and wheat are chiefly grown in this farm. It also serves the purpose of demonstration of improved methods of cultivation which is indispensable for obtaining the maximum yield.

The Sisal Plantation Farm at Rajnagar with an area of 1,050 acres was started in the year 1955-56. The object of starting the farm is two-fold. Firstly, the farm aims at a fruitful utilization of the vast tract of mostly barren lands in the district by growing Sisal and other improved commercial crops. Secondly, the farm is engaged in the production of Sisal fibre and therefrom Sisal ropes with the purpose of promoting rope industries in the neighbourhood.

Warehouse & Cold Storage

Up to the end of the Third Plan period there was no Warehouse in the district. At a later stage, however, one Warehouse was established at Ahmadpur with a sub-centre at Rampurhat with a total storage capacity of 7,500 quintals under the control of the State Warehousing Corporation, West Bengal. At present, there is another Warehouse at Sainthia under the control of the Central Warehouse Corporation. In 1968, the number of cold storage operating in the district was 4 and the particulars of these storages are given below:

PARTICULARS OF COLD STORAGES, OPERATING IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1968

Name of Cold Storage	*Location*	*Capacity (in tons)*
Vijay Cold Storage	Sainthia	12,400
Sharda Ice Manufacturing & Refrigeration Corporation	Sainthia	1,875
Bokaria Ice & Cold Storage	Sainthia	1,865
Maskaria & Dasrapuria Cold Storage	Nalhati	850

Sinking of tubewells

Under the supervision of the Agricultural Department, a total of 472 shallow tubewells were sunk in the district during the period from 1965-66 to 1968-69 as shown in the statement below[1]:

DISTRIBUTION OF SHALLOW TUBEWELLS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT 1966-69

Year	*Number of tubewells sunk*
1965-66	7
1966-67	135
1967-68	97
1968-69	233
Total	472

Distribution of pumps

Pumps were also distributed during the same period by the local Agricultural Office, the total number of pumps distributed being 932. Pumps were also distributed by other organizations under certain terms and conditions to the deserving agriculturists during the year 1968-69 as shown in the following statement.[2]

PUMPS DISTRIBUTED BY DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT 1968-69

Name of the organization	*Number of pumps distributed*
State Bank of India	245
United Commercial Bank	53
Agro-Industries Corporation	94
Total	392

1,2 Source: Principal Agricultural Officer, Birbhum

Distribution of plant protection equipments

Plant protection materials like Hand Sprayer and Hand Duster were also sold to the cultivators in recent years, the number of Hand Sprayers sold in 1968-69 being 122.

Deep tubewells

In recent years, efforts were made by the l. cal Agriculture Department to sink more deep tubewells for providing irrigation water. Upto 1969-70, the number of tubewells drilled was 26, while the number of energised tubewell was 19. Of these tubewells, as many as 10 were in operation, the remaining 9 being energised but not put into use during the period. The *Kharij* area benefited from these 10 tubewells was 160 acres and the area for *rabi* crop benefited from the same sources was 460 acres.[1] As regards sinking of shallow tubewells, it may be added here that 135 such tubewells were sunk in the district in 1966-67 and some more schemes were also sanctioned in the later years under Small Irrigation Schemes.

State aid to Agriculture

Normally, agricultural loans, cattle purchase loans and fertilizer loans are advanced to deserving cultivators by the District Officer through the Block Development Officers, besides various other loans disbursed by the Agriculture and Community Development Department from their budgetary provisions. The following table shows the amounts distributed by the Collector of the district from 1963-64 to 1967-68 towards agricultural, cattle purchase and fertilizer loans.[2]

Year	*Agricultural Loan (in Rs.)*	*Cattle purchase Loan (in Rs.)*	*Fertilizer Loan (in Rs.)*
1963-64	6,20,800	3,30,840	4,26,360
1964-65	3,09,000	1,94,000	3,96,900
1965-66	4,18,100	1,45,000	2,50,500
1966-67	3,91,500	1,70,000	2,84,360
1967-68	6,00,000	2,50,000	10,47,490

The farmers also get crop Loans through the local co-operative societies. In 1967-68, the total amount distributed through the co-operative societies of the district was Rs. 50,71,280.00, while the farmers received Rs. 67,09,500.00 on account of various crop loans from these societies in 1968-69.

1,2 Source: Collector, Birbhum.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FISHERIES

There is no land in the district where fodder crops are grown exclusively. The pressure on land owing to increasing agriculture (food and cash crops) leaves little space to be used as grass lands and this brings limitation in providing with adequate food supply to the cattle. As there is no land in the district for growing fodder crops on an extensive scale, crop rotation schemes and mixed farming are being encouraged to overcome this difficulty. Improved fodder seeds for use both in *Kharif* and *rabi* seasons are also distributed at subsidized rates among the cultivators of the district. During the Second Plan period, 1,608 maunds of fodder seeds and cuttings were distributed, while 16,400 quintals of the same were distributed during the Third Plan. The district had thirteen Fodder Demonstration plots in the same period.[1] The fodder problem is as acute in Birbhum as in most of the other districts of the State. The ordinary villager, being a poor man, can hardly buy all his needs of the fodder which sells at a high rate. He being mostly interested in the cultivation of food and cash crop, cannot be persuaded to keep a part of his land earmarked for fodder production.

Livestock & measures to improve quality of breeds

In 1961, the district had a total livestock population of 11,13,515 consisting of 6,77,095 cattle, 3,3,449 buffaloes, 70,276 sheep, 3,12,301 goats, 16,500 pigs and 3,765 horses. The number of livestock outside these categories was 129. The local breed of cows is poor in spite of the attempts made to improve it for the cultivators and other village folk give little attention to the breeding. With the launching of the Community Development Programme, the Development Blocks at Ahmadpur, Mahammad Bazar and Nalhati introduced better bulls in concentrated zones for the improvement of the local breeds. There is a growing difficulty in finding good pasture for the cattle with the rapid extension of agriculture and grazing grounds are now scarce in the eastern part of the district. The small plots of pampas near the villages which yield scanty grass and the chance herbage found in uncultivated and uncultivable land bordering the tanks or the raised boundaries of the fields as also the stubble left in the paddy fields provide all the grazing of the cattle. This is usually supplemented by fodder consisting of rice crop. In the west, however, there are still some pasture lands on the uplands, but the *sal* forests where the cattle once used to graze have mostly been cut down.

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[1] Source: Fodder Development Officer, Directorate of Animal Husbandry, West Bengal.

According to the Livestock Census of 1961, there were 4,16,736 fowls and 2,80,037 ducks in the district. During the various Plan periods, poultry development work was taken up in some Blocks, especially in the Development Blocks of Ahmadpur, Mahammad Bazar and Nalhati to breed improved varieties of poultry, ducks and chickens. The improved breeds of cocks and chickens were supplied to the villagers at subsidized rates during the First, Second and Third Plan periods. During the Second Plan period, Rampurhat and Nalhati used to export to the markets of Calcutta large quantities of live poultry. In recent years, arrangements have been made to grant loans upto Rs. 400 to villagers through the Block Offices for running poultry.

Fisheries

The rivers of the district do not offer much scope for fishing as they remain dry during the most part of the year. It is only during the rainy season that they yield a small quantity of fish. As most of the tanks and ponds also dry up during the summer they are not very useful for rearing fish. Owing to these natural adverse factors, pisciculture has not made any significant progress in the district. During the rains, however, the tanks are utilized to some extent for rearing fish.

The types of fish available in the district are: *Ruhi, Katla, Mrigel, Boal, Magur, Air, Folui, Chital, Sol, Lata, Koi,* etc. Of these, the common varieties available in the market are *Ruhi, Katla, Mrigel* and *Sol*. Eggs and fry of these fishes are brought from the Murshidabad District and Bihar during the monsoon and stocked in tanks for culture. *Magur, Sol* and *Koi* are found in weed-infested tanks and ponds.

Tank Improvement work

According to the Settlement Report of 1931, there were more than 10,000 tanks in the district at that time and about 90 per cent of these tanks were reported to be derelict. "The numerous old tanks show that the necessity of these tanks was once realised. The long established and well known customs of irrigation, still existing, indicate that the purpose was clearly grasped."[1] Several of these tanks were of large size, e.g., the *Dantindighi,* one mile from Dubrajpur, the Raipur *Sair* four miles south of Suri, and the Lambodarpur *Sair* a mile north-west of the same place. In this connection, O'Malley states, "Smaller tanks are very numerous, and it has been estimated that each village has at least five on the average. In the village of Sankarpur, for

[1] B. B. Mukherjee—Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Birbhum; 1924-32, Calcutta, 1937. p. 34.

instance, there are 111 tanks occupying 167 acres, and 46 are so close to each other, that mere footpaths on the top of the tanks separate one from another."[1] Many of these irrigation tanks having silted up have become useless; some of them have become so dry that they are let out for cultivation.

Fishermen Co-operatives

In 1966-67, there were altogether 20 fishermen cooperative societies in the district with a membership of 643 persons while in 1967-68 the number of such societies increased to 21 having 673 members. Out of these 21 societies as many as 14 societies were organized and registered during the period between 1960 and 1966, the oldest of these societies being registered in 1939. During the Third Five Year Plan, a sum of Rs. 3,750.00 was advanced to the fishermen cooperatives under various schemes for making or purchasing fishing nets as also for rearing of fish in semi-derelict tanks.

Veterinary Aid

Before the launching of the First Five Year Plan Programme, the livestock work was limited to the upgrading of local breeds of cattle through stud bulls and the distribution of improved stock of poultry. There were five Itinerant Veterinary Assistant Surgeons with headquarters at Suri, Dubrajpur, Bolpur, Nalhati and Rampurhat while two subdivisional Veterinary Assistant Surgeons were also posted within the municipal areas of Suri and Rampurhat to tackle the various problems concerning the bovine population. While the Itinerant Veterinary Assistant Surgeons were completely under the Directorate and the supply of medicines and equipments used to be supplied from the Directorate, the establishments of the Subdivisional Veterinary Assistant Surgeons were under the dual control of the Government and the District Board. The duties of the former were mainly limited to the control of epidemic diseases of cattle and poultry and such cases were attended by the V.A.S. both at headquarters and while on tours. The duties of the Subdivisional Assistant Surgeons were to treat cases in the hospital both as out-patient and in-patient. The District Veterinary Officer was the inspecting and administrative officer of the district in respect of technical affairs.

During the First Plan period, three Block Veterinary hospitals were established at Mahammad Bazar, Ahmadpur and Nalhati. In the later stage, the veterinary staff included, besides the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, two Veterinary Field Assistants,

[1] L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum, Calcutta. 1910. P. 54.

one Compounder and one Peon at each Block. Later, one N.E.S. Block was also established at Bolpur having one Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Two Veterinary Field Assistants and one Peon. During the Second Plan period, ten more Block Veterinary dispensaries were established and another six dispensaries with usual staff strength were also put into operation during the Third Plan. During the Second Plan period, six Aid Centres were opened and the number for the same in the Third Plan was seven. In the later stage of the First Plan, the Suri Veterinary Hospital was provincialised and upgraded to Class I State Veterinary Hospital. Subsequently, the Rampurhat Veterinary Hospital was also provincialised but still kept as Class II State Veterinary Hospital. In 1968, two Artificial Insemination Centres at Mahammad Bazar and Mayureswar Development Blocks were also opened.

During the Third Plan period, effective steps were taken for laboratory examination of blood, stool and other pathological specimens at the State Veterinary Hospital. Steps were also taken to protect animals with serum and vaccine supplied from the district stock or other sources. In 1969, there was one depot at Suri and one sub-depot at Rampurhat for storing biological products. Electric therapy was also applied to some animals suffering from arthritis, skin diseases, sprain and other traumatic ailments. The following statement gives the number for artificial insemination for the period between 1963-64 and 1967-68 in Birbhum district showing the progress of this work [1]

Year	*No. of cases of artificial insemination*
1963-64	2,429
1964-65	2,621
1965-66	2,704
1966-67	2,812
1967-68	2,954

Rinderpest, Anthrax, Black Quarter, Haemorrhagic Septicaemia, foot and mouth diseases are the common infectious aliments of cattle, while Fowl cholera, Ranikhet disease and Fowl Pox are the maladies affecting poultry. All out-breaks are attended to promptly and the affected animals are medically treated wherever possible. The statement below shows the number of cattle diseases attended to during the period from 1963-64 to 1967-68.

[1] Source. District Veterinary Officer, Suri.

Year	*Rinder-pest*	*Anth-rax*	*Black Quarter*	*Haemo-rrhagic Septi-caemia*	*Foot & Mouth diseases*
1963-64	—	20	39	26	10
1964-65	—	25	17	26	37
1965-66	4	17	17	14	23
1966-67	85	18	17	22	28
1967-68	87	35	25	24	28

The number of mass vaccination against Rinderpest in cattle and Ranikhet disease in poultry for the corresponding period is given below:[1]

Name of disease	*1963-64*	*1964-65*	*1965-66*	*1966-67*	*1967-68*
Rinderpest	50,111	86,015	66,458	94,374	94,149
Ranikhet disease	2,49,608	1,96,154	2,02,943	2,40,776	2,04,380

In 1963-64, the total number of cattle and birds treated was 2,429 and the same for 1964-65 was 2,621. In 1965-66, a total of 2,704 cattle and birds were treated, while the number for 1966-67 and 1967-68 was 2,812 and 2,954 respectively. The following statement shows the number of cows inseminated through artificial insemination and also the number of cases relating to castration of scrub bulls as a preventive measure against the growth of non-descript cattle.[2]

Year	*Number of cows inseminated through A. I.*	*Number of castration of scrub-bulls*
1963-64	2,429	250
1964-65	2,621	296
1965-66	2,704	85
1966-67	2,812	364
1968-69	2,954	553

1,2 Source: District Veterinary Officer, Suri.

FORESTRY

The district of Birbhum had a total forest area of 53 square miles in 1964 of which about 10 square miles were of proper stock and quality. The remaining area was rather scrubby, having degraded uplands, the trees there being mostly *Sal* with a sparse mixture of other varieties. Reduced in terms of *Sal* and miscellaneous forests, the 53 square miles of forests have about 45 square miles of *Sal* forests and the balance 8 square miles of miscellaneous forests. The entire tract includes sizable pockets of waste land and degraded areas. The 53 square miles of forest area constitute only three per cent of the total land available, as against the National Forest Policy resolution of having at least 20 per cent of forest area in the plains. There is no doubt that unrestricted felling of trees in the past has made a vast tract of forest land almost a sterile and barren waste. Whenever the land was fertile, it was ploughed up and after yielding good crop for a certain period there was a fall infertility. The higher slopes which had been kept barren for years were found to be continually eroding.

At present, more and more waste lands have been vested to the Forest Department, partly by acquisition and partly by transfer for anti-erosion and afforestation measures. According to an estimate of the District Magistrate, the total waste land in the district in 1958-59 was 29,888 acres. Even if 20,000 acres of waste lands are transferred, the productive forest area would cover only 4.6% of the land area.[1] This is why other sources of availability of land for afforestation should be tapped to make up the deficit. The canal banks of the net work of canals of the Mayurakshi Project, the Bakreswar Canal System and other small irrigation schemes offer the chief source of such land while the Hinglo Irrigation Project proposed to be undertaken would provide for substantial areas for afforestation. The following table presents the total area of the State-managed forests articificially regenerated and afforestated till 1964.

[1] Source: Centenary Commemoration Volume: West Bengal Forests. Calcutta, 1964. p. 159.

AFFORESTATION WORK IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT. 1955-64[1]

(in hectares)

Up to the Year	*Area planted*	*Sal*	*Teak*	*Eucal-yptus*	*Miscella-neous*
1955	426 (1,076)	253 (253)	—		173 (873)
1956	488 (1,564)	214 (467)	- -		274 (1,097)
1957	171 (1,735)	68 (535)	—		103 (1,200)
1958	239 (1,974)	116 (651)	—		123 (1,323)
1959	55 (2,029)	32 (683)	4 (4)		19 (1,342)
1960	266 (2,295)	125 (808)	38 (42)		103 (1,445)
1961	92 (2,387)	38 (846)	7 (49)		47 (1,492)
1962	115 (2,502)	93 (939)	6 (55)		16 (1,508)
1963	141 (2,643)	107 (1,046)	9 (64)	11 (11)	14 (1,522)
1964	101 (2,744)	52 (1,094)	3 (67)	12 (23)	34 (1,556)

The table below shows the revenue and expenditure under the Third Five Year Plan as earned and incurred by the Forest Department in respect of Birbhum district.[2]

Average of years	*Average annual revenue*	*Average annual Expenditure*		*Average annual surplus or deficit*	*Average annual surplus or deficit including developmental expenditure*
		Normal	*Develop-mental*		
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1961-62	55,626	2,16,251	1,73.479	– 1,60,625	– 3,34,104
1962-63	75,992	2,30,639	2,63,592	– 1,54,647	– 4,18,239
1963-64	83,692	2,19,516	1,80,567	– 1,35,824	– 3,16,391
1964-65	63,777	2,47,234	1,67,004	– 1,83,457	– 3,50,461

In order to cope with the fearful march of soil erosion, the Forest Department has taken charge of all Private forests in the district, at first under the West Bengal Private Forest Act and subsequently under the Estates Acquisition Act of 1954. The

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[1] Source: ibid, p. 288, The figures in brakets show progressive total.
[2] Source: Century Commemoration Volume: West Bengal Forests, Calcutta, 1964. p. 318.

Forest Department has now undertaken rehabilitation of degraded forests and re-afforestation in barren waste lands, acquired by the Department. The forest committee, appointed in 1938 after preliminary enquiries, was of the opinion that 'The Forests which the committee saw is in a miserable condition and those which they did not see are to be in much the same state', and also remarked that 'As regards its forests Birbhum may be said to be in a complete decadence.' This is why efforts have since been made by the Forest Department to intensify soil and water conserving measures in forest areas and in the waste lands. It has also been decided to obtain possession of vested waste lands for afforestation as most of these are unfit for agriculture. Another important object has been to replace the *Sal* coppice stools by plantations of more valuable timber species like *Teak* and *Sissoo*. It has also been found that soft woods like *Eucalyptus*, *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Cassia Siamea* have a short rotation and have great potentiality in this tract.

FLOOD, FAMINES AND DROUGHTS

Birbhum is not liable, in any marked degree, to famine or flood on a scale sufficiently extensive to affect its general prosperity chiefly because the means of transport are sufficient to prevent the danger of isolation in the event of a local failure of crops, and to avert suffering on a large scale by importation of food from other districts. The old record, however, shows that formerly this district had to suffer frequently from droughts and crop failure.

Famine of 1770

During the early period of British administration, the district was devastated by famine and as a result many hundreds of villages were entirely depopulated and even in large towns there were houses from which most of the members had left for other places. Mr. Higginson, Supervisor of Birbhum, in his letter of 1771 to the East India Company, recommended suspension of the collection of arrears of revenue from "the remaining poor ryots, who have so considerably suffered from the late famine, that by far the greatest part of them are rendered utterly incapable of paying them." In 1771, according to returns submitted to authority, more than one-third of the cultivable land was found deserted, while in 1776 'four acres lay waste for every seven that remained under cultivation."[1] In 1791 again, the crops suffered badly from drought and the Collector had to recommend a suspension of revenue to the extent of nearly Rs. 60,000 ; and,

[1] L. S. S O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910, p. 58.

at the same time, grain *golas* (granaries of rice) were opened near Suri. In 1800, and again in 1803, there was drought owing to the failure of rains. "The prices were so high that the Collector, Mr. R. Thackeray, proposed a special enquiry to ascertain how much grain the district could properly export and then to have the remainder sold at fixed prices."[1] There was also scarcity in 1829 and 1837 and during the years 1865 to 1867 the district suffered again, mainly from scanty rainfall.

Famine of 1874

The famine of 1874, accompanied by the epidemic of fever known as the Burdwan fever, was severely felt in Birbhum. The rainfall in the preceding years was very scanty during the ploughing season. Excepting some areas in the eastern part of the district where rainfall was adequate and irrigation is more general, the rice crop was a short one. Besides unfavourable harvests, the Burdwan fever which invaded a wider area was also responsible for the immense suffering of the common people. In 1873, the rainfall was normal in quantity but its distribution was abnormal. The rainfall in Birbhum in this particular year affords a striking example of how sufficient moisture may be neutralized by unseasonable distribution.

The effect of this abnormal weather on the harvests varied with the crops and localities in which they were raised. According to the report of the Collector of the district in December 1873, "in the district as a whole there had been nine-sixteenth of an average autumn (*aus*) rice and three-eighth of an average winter rice (*aman*) harvest."[2] This serious failure of the rice crops was followed by an widescale failure of the cold weather crops, such as, wheat, mustard, oil-seeds, etc. This deficiency was soon reflected in the market. In September 1873, and in the month of 1874, rice sold at double the usual rate, the normal price of rice being about 27 seers for the rupee. So, there was acute distress in several areas and appeals were made by private and charitable institutions for public relief. In March 1874, there was great want among the labouring classes to whom the failure of the crops meant the denial of harvesting employment, by which they subsist to a great extent.

During the summer of that year, the prospect became still more gloomy. Pauperism and crime were on the increase, the cultivators being reluctantly forced on the relief works for dis-

[1,2] ibid. p. 59.

tress. Fateful diseases like cholera and small-pox were ravaging the district, while rice was not available in many villages at market rates. The distress was utmost in August 1874 'when there were at one time 38,321 persons in receipt of charitable relief and 9,866 on relief works.'[1] In the month of March of that year, only 683 persons were being gratuitously fed, while this number rose to 3,600 in the beginning of May. By the end of May, the number was 9,801 and this number swelled to 18,104 by the end of June. In August and September of that year, between 30,000 and 40,000 persons were in daily receipt of charitable relief. During this period "in all, 1,725 tons of rice were gratuitously distributed, 800 tons advanced on loan and 1,004 tons paid as wages."[2]

At the same time, a sum of Rs. 49,456 was spent on account of relief, Rs. 64,809 in wages and Rs. 61,615 as loan to deserving families. On an average, the labourers employed on relief works daily numbered 3,846 in April, 8,054 in May, 10,352 in June, 6,655 in July, 7,826 in August, and 5,194 in September. "Relief operations ceased in the end of October, with the incoming of the rice harvest, for fortunately the rainfall was both seasonable and abundant. In November-December the harvest of *aman* rice caused prices, which had steadily kept up to abnormal rates till then, to fall rapidly, and they resumed their normal standard at the end of December."[3]

Scarcity of 1885

In 1885, there was again scarcity calling for immediate relief measures in some areas of the district, which had already suffered from an unfavourable distribution of the rainfall of the previous year. The local officers were empowered to tackle any sudden emergency through adequate relief measures. In March 1885, the relief operations were started in the affected areas of the district, and the daily average number in receipt of relief in the end of June was 14,340, of whom 5,841 were relieved by private agencies. A total amount of Rs. 18,530 was spent in relief works, while Government also spent an amount of Rs. 22,297 on charitable relief, the total expenditure incurred by Government on this score being Rs. 40,827 only, besides, Rs. 9,561 was raised by public subscription for the purpose. In the relief of distress, Government efforts were ably and efficiently supplemented by two principal organizations of Calcutta, viz.,

[1] L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers, Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910.
[2] ibid, p. 60.
[3] loc. cit.

the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*, with a temporary headquarters at Nalhati, and the Indian Association, with headquarters at Nawada, 8 miles east of Nalhati. The relief workers of these organizations were early in the field and afforded the local officers valuable assistance, while also distributing in an effective and economical manner the funds which private charity had placed at their disposal. Two other local organization of Rampurhat, the *Sadbhab Uddipani Sabha* and the *Hari Sabha* also assisted in the work of relief distribution. Some local zaminders of the district also maintained at much cost kitchens where a large number of poor and helpless persons were fed daily.

Floods of 1913-14

During 1913-14, unusually high floods occurred in the district causing serious loss of life and property, and damage to standing crops, seedlings and houses. A number of persons were drowned, and the loss of cattle was heavy. The District Officer took immediate steps to help the people by giving shelter, medical help, grain and money. The distressed people were also helped by local bodies and public spirited gentlemen. Funds were placed by Government at the disposal of the District Officer for gratuitous relief and for the grant of agricultural loans. Arrangements were made for the distribution of food and clothing where necessary. Suspension of revenue collection was made in all the flood-affected areas.

Drought of 1927-28

During 1927-28, parts of the district suffered from deficient rainfall, resulting in failure of winter crops which caused acute distress, particularly to the cultivating classes and landless labourers. To meet the situation, relief operations were started by the District Boards concerned with their own funds supplemented by advances from Government. Land improvements and agricultural loans were also distributed according to requirements. Besides, various relief committees were organized to help the affected people. Government supplemented the resourcs of these bodies by allotting money for gratuitous relief. But most of these measures were undertaken in 1928-29.

Natural calamities of 1933-34

The monsoon particularly failed in West Bengal, making transplantation of paddy difficult or impossible and adversely affecting the crop in those areas while had already been transplanted. The high lands in the district suffered most severely and distress gradually became more acute. Test relief works had to be started in the autumn on an extensive scale. The District Boards, aided by advances from Government, rose to the occasion and the promptitude with which action was taken undoubtedly pre-

vented a great deal of suffering and privation. Considerable sums were advanced by Government in the form of agricultural loans, gratuitous relief and advances to District Boards for test relief operations. In 1934-35 also, because of deficient rainfall, the distress prevailed and deputations of cultivators and labourers met the district authorities applying for relief. The arrangements for distribution of gratuitous relief were made as soon as the attendance at test relief works showed that this was necessary.

The famine of 1943

The failure of the winter crop (*aman*) of 1942 combined with meagre stocks of rice carried forward from 1942 to 1943 lead to a serious shortage in the total supply of rice available for consumption in Bengal. The crisis developed rapidly and the measures taken by the Central and Provincial Governments prevented a catastrophe in Greater Calcutta, which was at that time the main base in eastern Asia. The disaster, however, broke out in all its fury in rural Bengal affecting the population of this district also. The stoppage, due to war, of imports from Burma and lack of planned movement of supplies available from sources outside the province added to the gravity of the situation. Deaths occurred as a direct result of the famine as also of the epidemics following in its train. The 1943 famine was sufficiently arrested during the following year. Since then, there has been no acute food shortage in the district except sporadic instances of local scarcities calling for occasional test relief operations or other forms of Government assistance.

CHAPTER V

INDUSTRIES

Extraction of iron from its ore was a flourishing industry in Birbhum more than a hundred years ago. The annual production from about seventy indigenous furnaces was estimated by Dr. Oldham as 1,700 tons in 1852. The iron ore of Birbhum occurs in beds towards the base of the laterite deposits. The ore is not only abundant, but also contains a high percentage of iron averaging over 40 per cent, and being occasionally nearly 60 per cent. It is not worked now, but formerly extraction of iron from it constituted an industry of considerable importance. The first application to work the iron mines by an improved system was made by an Indian, Indra Narayan Sarma, in 1774. The Government agreed to lease out the mines to him on condition that he would be required to pay a rent of Rs. 5,000/- per annum after the fourth year of occupation. Though the offer was accepted, the lease was never taken up. In 1777, Messrs. Motte and Farquhar were given 'the exclusive privilege of manufacturing iron in the Honourable company's possessions in the country west of the meridian of Burdwan and of selling the produce free of duty'.[1] The place first selected by the Company for the furnaces was located in Jharia, but in the following year Mr. Farquhar begged for an alteration in the terms, having in the meantime discovered that the ores of Birbhum were better suited to his purpose than those of Jharia. His prayer was granted and in 1779, after further correspondence, an advance of Rs. 15,000 was made by Government to Mr. Farquhar in order to enable him to complete his furnaces. Mr. Farquhar carried on his business from that time to 1789, but little is known about the progress of work made during this period. Some of the *jagirdars* and landlords claimed that the revenue from the *Loha Mahals* (as then called) would go to them and the records of this period are thus full of accounts of disputes and contests with the local people. Farquhar retained the lease of the *Loha Mahals* till 1795, after which they lapsed to the Zamindar, who disposed of parts of the estate.[2] 'It is stated that Birbhum hook iron, during the period of Farquhar's labours, was sold in Calcutta at Rs. 5 per

OLD TIME INDUSTRIES

Iron ores of Birbhum

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[1] L. S. S. O'Malley—Birbhum District Gazetteer, 1910. p. 68.

[2] Source: Contribution towards a History of Development of the Mineral Resources of India, by S. G. T. Heatly.

maund, Balasore at Rs. 6-8 and English at Rs. 10 or Rs. 11. In all probability this iron was produced by the direct indigenous process, not by European methods."[1]

In Welby Jackson's short account of the Birbhum iron works, published in 1845, it is reported that there were about thirty furnaces produced at a cost of Rs. 17/-, each with a capacity of producing about 25 maunds of iron at each smelting, which lasted for four days and nights. In 1852, Dr. Oldham reported on the iron of Birbhum and the Damodar Valley. According to Dr. Oldham, native furnaces, on a large scale were in operation at town centres, viz., Ballia, Narayanpur, Deocha, Dhanra and Ganpur. At Deocha there were thirty furnaces for the reduction of ore; these were worked by Muslims, the refiners being Hindus. The estimated average outturn from each furnace in the year was 34 tons of iron and the total outturn of raw iron was estimated at 2,380 tons annually from all the seventy furnaces. 'In these furnaces the *Kachcha* iron, unlike that produced in other parts of India, formed at the bottom of the furnace in a molten condition, and resembled good pig-iron. The refining was really a sort of puddling process, which induced a pasty condition admitting of the iron being drawn out and hammered until it became thoroughly malleable."[2] The maunds of *Kachcha* iron were said to yield seven maunds and ten seers of the *pakka* on an average from which the outturn of refined iron was deduced to be, approximately 1,700 tons, at a cost of £ 4-4s per ton. According to Dr. Oldham's estimate, an additional expenditure of 50 per cent was necessary to prepare this iron in marketable shape as bars, etc. thus bringing the final cost at £ 6-6s per ton. Even then it could not complete with English iron at the prices then prevailing in Calcutta. But being charcoal iron, its softness made it better suited for some purposes than English iron. Dr. Oldham finally came to the conclusion that because of the comparatively scanty supply of ore and the increasing difficulty of procuring charcoal fuel, the extension of the operation was not possible.[3]

About the year 1855, Messrs. Mackey & Company of Calcutta established the Birbhum Iron Works Company and selected Mahammad Bazar as a site for their factories and furnaces. In 1858, one Mr. Casperz was the manager of the works who stated that the ore contained 46.5% iron and that the production was

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[1] L. S. S. O'Malley—Birbhum District Gazetteer, 1910. p. 69.
[2] Source: V. Ball—Economic Geology of India, 1881. pp. 262-65.
[3] Source: Birbhum District Gazetteer, 1910.

2 tons of pig iron per day which was reported as equal in quality to No. 1 grey pig from England and also that it could be delivered at Calcutta at Rs. 37/- per ton. There were, however, many and frequent interruptions to the operation of these works. W. T. Blanford, who reported at length on Messrs. Mackey's iron works in 1860, concluded that the manufacture was being carried on at a loss and if additional capital were employed, iron could be produced at Rs. 37½ per ton as against English iron which was sold in Calcutta at that time for about Rs. 58 per ton. He also concluded that the supply of charcoal being limited, the operations could be conducted only on a limited scale. In 1872, when the landlord to Mackey's works at Mahammad Bazar died and further attempt to re-open them failed, this last furnace was closed; and with it the most complete indigenous system of iron manufacture ever practised in Bengal stopped working for an indefinite period. In 1875, Mr. Hughes of the Geological Survey of India reported favourably on the prospect of iron manufacture in Birbhum and some time in this year Messrs. Burn and Co. of Calcutta commenced operations in the district, but after a trial for a few months, they abandoned the attempt as it did not appear to be profitable. It may be added that establishment of larger blast furnace by Europeans elsewhere, coupled with infliction of heavy royalty on local smelters, ruined this indigenous industry. The last of the indigenous furnaces at Deocha closed down in 1872.

Indigo manufacture

Indigo manufacture was once an important industry of the district, the centres of the industry being Ilambazar and Supur, where there were large factories. It was first introduced into the district about 1795 by John Cheap, the company's Commercial Resident, and was carried on by David Erskine, who established a factory at Dorana, about six miles west of Surul and subsequently at Ilambazar. His firm was known as Erskine & Co. which opened several collieries also. In 1872, this gentleman was in possession of eight factories in Birbhum and ten beyond the district boundary. The firm ceased to exist in 1882, and the factory at Supur was closed down in 1887 after working for about a century. There is no indigo factory in the district at present.

Manufacture of Lac and Lac toys

Lac manufacture was once an industry confined to the village of Ilambazar. The following extract from O'Malley's Gazetteer of 1910 gives an idea of the industry as found in those days. "The stick lac is brought in from the western jungles by low castes or semi-aboriginal tribes. In this form it consists of small

twigs surrounded by cylinders of translucent orange-yellow gum, in which the insects are imbedded; the best lac is said to be obtained from twigs of the *Kusum* tree, and it is also produced on the *sal*, *palas* and *pakur* trees. The raw material, when brought in, is separated from the twigs and ground into small particles, which are placed in large earthen jars and allowed to soak in water for about 24 hours. It is then well rubbed by hand till the colouring matter has been thoroughly extracted. This consists of the dead bodies of the insects (*Coccus lacca*) buried in the gum. These, when the fluid is allowed to stand in large vats, gradually precipitate themselves to the bottom. The water is drained off, and the sediment, after being strained, pressed and dried, becomes lac-dye, ready for the maket. This is used for preparing the cotton, called *alta*, which is used by Hindu females. The gummy exudation of the insect, in the meantime, is carefully dried in the sun, placed in long bags, and melted over a strong fire. It is then squeezed out, either in thin sheets upon an earthen cylinder, when it is known as button lac. Leaf lac is no longer made at Ilambazar, and the trade is confined to button lac."[1]

Towards the close of the last century, Messrs. Erskine & Co. had a large shellac and lac-dye factory at Ilambazar. This factory was subsequently held by Messrs. Farquharson and Campbell & Co. which managed the establishment till 1882 when the factory was transferred to Indian hands. About 1910, the industry consisted of several small factories at Ilambazar and its neighbourhood. The lacquered articles turned out by the artisans at these centres were bracelets, ink-pots, rulers, cups, pots and toys, such as imitations of fruits, flowers and animals and were said to be of good design and workmanship. The industry was being carried on by a class of men locally known as Nuris. It is now almost extinct as the last of the Nuris from Ilambazar works, who was working on the Sriniketan establishment a few years ago and could make excellent toys and other ornaments of lac, has also retired to his village home owing to old age. It may also be added that at one time about 200 families were employed in this trade and there was a good demand for lac-*alta* (pigment for ladies' feet) and other lacquered articles. The industry ultimately suffered from competition with earthenware toys of Krishnagar.

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[1] L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910. p. 75.

Other old time industries

Other old time industries of the district include silk weaving, cocoon rearing, *tussar* and cotton weaving and the manufacture of brass and bell-metal products. Pottery manufacture, basket and mat-making, shoe-making, etc. may also be classified under old time industries.

Rise of new industries

While some of the old time industries, such as, brass and bell-metal, pottery, silk weaving, etc. are languishing for want of raw materials and competition from open market, new industries like cycle-repairing, tailoring, general and jobbing, engineering, etc. are opening new avenues for employment in the industrial sector. With the gradual spread of electricity in the urban and rural areas, more and more new industries are coming into existence. Among the new entrants are, a few automobile repairing shops, lathe-machine shops or vulcanizing workshops which can be noticed particularly in the Bolpur area. Here power-driven saw mills have prospered with the extension of building construction. Another important new industry, which requires the use of electricity, is the production of re-inforced cement concrete Spun Pipes, for which there is an increasing demand.

POWER

Prior to the enactment of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, there was very little development in the district so far as the supply of electricity is concerned. Suri, the district town was, however, electrified by a private licensee to whom a licence was issued by the State Government in April 1939, the actual supply being started in February 1949. A few years later, in 1941, the municipal area of Santiniketan was also electrified by a private company. The arrangement for the supply of electricity at Santiniketan was taken over by the Electricity Development Directorate on 3 May 1954 for the purpose of speedy development of the place. No other place could be taken up for electrification until the State Electricity Board was constituted on 1 May 1955. Immediately after the formation of the Board, Suri was the first town to be taken over by it from the private licensee, whose licence was revoked owing to the latter's failure in maintaining supply. The Board started supplying power at Suri with effect from 8 June 1965.

Both at Suri and at Santiniketan there were local diesel generating sets for the supply of power. With the construction of the Canada Dam and setting up of the Mayurakshi Hydel Power Station, power to the extent of 4,000 Kilowatt was allocated for

distribution in Bihar while the balance amount of power was earmarked for distribution in the district of Birbhum. With the availability of Mayurakshi power, high voltage sub-transmission lines were drawn from Masanjore to Suri and then from Suri to Sainthia in the latter part of 1955. After the formation of the Board, high voltage distributing lines were further drawn to Dubrajpur, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Santiniketan and thus all the towns in the district were electrified by the end of 1956. Power facilities were further extended to such developing areas as Mahammad Bazar, Ahmadpur and Mallarpur by the end of First Plan. During the Third Plan period, places like Hetampur, Domohani, Karidhya, Labhpur, Kirnahar, etc were electrified. This led to the early electrification of other places like Surul, Chatra, Margram, Basoa, Vishnupur, Purandarpur, Abanishpur, etc.

With the extension of high voltage distribution mains of the Board, the major industries of the district, such as, rice mills, oil mills, cold storages, etc. being interested in using power, became the consumers of the Board. A few collieries in the district have also been lately benefited owing to the supply of electricity. It may be added here that since the district is irrigated mostly by Mayurakshi Canals, there had been so far no encouraging response for the agricultural use of electricity.

Although power is mostly available from the Mayurakshi Project for distribution in the district, the same is also brought from the Durgapur Projects Limited at Durgapur to meet the requirement of the district.

The following statement gives an idea of total quantities of energy consumed in Birbhum district in recent years:

QUANTITY OF ENERGY CONSUMED IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1964-67

(In Kilowatt Hours)

	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67
Energy consumed	87,70,172	97,19,358	1,11,81,101
Industrial consumption	53,25,165	59,96,509	72,35,528
Non-Industrial consumption	34,45,007	37,22,849	39,45,573

Rural Electrification

Under the First and Second plans, no rapid progress could be made in the field of rural electrification as the available funds had to be utilised for increasing the generating capacity and to lay high voltage transmission and low voltage distribution lines

to towns which were still unelectrified. During the Third Plan, however, efforts were made to speed up the work, and by the end of March 1965 as many as 34 villages were electrified out of a total number of 2,207 inhabited villages in the district.[1] By the end of June 1969, twentyone more villages were electrified thus bringing the total number of villages electrified to 55.[2] It may be stated here that the number of towns electrified in the district was 6 during the same period. A statement showing the towns and villages electrified in the district till the end of June 1969 with the date of electrification as given in Appendix A.

INDUSTRIES AND MANUFACTURES OF THE DISTRICT

The mineral products of the district consist of iron, coal, limestone, laterite, granite and sandstone. It has already been stated that extraction and manufacture of iron from its ore constituted at one time an industry of considerable importance. But there are no such industries in the district at present. While no other heavy industries have ever flourished, some coal was discovered in the first decade of the present century at a place called Arang, about 28 miles from Suri, on the banks of the river *Ajay* in the western extremity of Dubrajpur P.S. A colliery was opened here in 1901 having a pit about 75 feet deep. The output of this colliery in 1908 was 1,000 tons and the average number of daily labourers employed was 5,940.[3] At present, however, mining and quarrying in Birbhum, though not very important for the entire State, give some employment to the workers of this district, and according to the Census of 1961 about 27 persons per thousand of the total working population are found to be absorbed in mining, quarrying, plantation, forestry, etc.[4]

Coal mines

While the history of coal mining in Bankura, Birbhum and Purulia Districts is not available, it may be stated that mining in Purulia District was started long ago and the seams lying at a shallow depth in the areas on opposite side of Damodar river were worked. Coal mining in the Bankura and the Birbhum Districts appear to have been extended at a much later date probably owing to the inferior quality of the coal and difficulty in its transport. The particulars of the collieries in the Birbhum District are given in the following statement:

[1] Source: West Bengal State Electricity Board Souvenir, 10th Anniversary Number (May 1965).
[2] Divisional Engineer (Commercial), West Bengal State Electricity Board.
[3] Source: Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910.
[4] Source: District Census Handbook: Birbhum 1961, p. 69.

COLLIERIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT IN 1962[1]

Name of the Colliery	*Mouza*	*Police Station*	*Sub-division*
Kankartola	Kankartola	Khayrasol	Suri
Bhadulia	"	"	"
East Parsundi	Parsundi	"	"
Gangaramchak	Gangaramchak	"	"
Russa	Russa	"	"
Bastabpur	Bastabpur	"	"
Kasta Bengal	Pursundi	"	"

The year-wise break up of coal production in tonnes is as given below:

YEAR-WISE BREAK UP OF COAL PRODUCTION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1958-62[2]

Year	*Production (in tonnes)*
1958	91,950
1959	98,089
1960	108,734
1961	105,676
1962	116,844

In recent years, however, the total output of coal has decreased owing chiefly to the closure of some mines. The total production of coal was only 56,642 tonnes in 1965 while for the years 1966 and 1967 the same was 65,642 tonnes and 56,275 tonnes respectively.

Large-scale industries

Birbhum being essentially an agricultural district, there are no such large-scale industries as textile mills or jute mills. It has already been stated that extraction of iron from its ore was once carried out on a large-scale, but at present there is no such industry. The only industry which was organized on an extensive scale in recent years was the National Sugar Mills of

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[1] Source: Mining Adviser, Directorate of Mines & Minerals, Commerce & Industries Department, West Bengal.

[2] Source: Hunday & Banerjee—Geology & Mineral Resources of West Bengal (Vol. 97), Geological Survey of India, Delhi, 1967. p. 111.

Ahmadpur under Sainthia P.S. which was set up in 1955. It functioned from the 1960-61 season to the 1963-64 season. It stopped production in March 1964. It is reported that chiefly because of the failure to ensure an adequate supply of irrigation water for sugarcane cultivation and bad communications in the area, not more than 48 per cent of the installed capacity of the plant could be utilized and working became uneconomic.

Cotton mills

A new cotton mill known as the Mayurakshi Cotton Mills Ltd. located at Panchra was registered in 1968. The number of persons employed during the year was 500 on an average.

Small-scale industries

The industries of the district do not play any significant role in the economic life of the people and only 7.53 per cent of the total workers of this district are engaged in any industrial pursuits, house-hold or otherwise. In the small-scale sector, a good number of workers, both male and female, are employed in the local rice mills. There were altogether 68 rice mills in the district in 1968 employing 2,879 persons of which the majority was female. The number of persons employed in the same year varied from 131 in Sarda Rice & Oil Mills located near Ahmadpur in Sainthia P.S. to 10 in Hetampur Ranjan Rice Mill located near Rajbati, Hetampur.[1] Rice mills being the major industries of the district, employ more women labour than men. According to the 1961 Census figures, both in the state and the district of Birbhum, every twentieth female worker was employed in manufacturing industries. Sainthia, Suri, Dubrajpur and Bolpur police stations are noted for trading activities in particular owing to the presence of rice mills, the manufacturing employment being maximum in these areas.[2]

The local rice mills which offer employment to a good number of working population at different periods of the year are run with the help of both electricity and steam and at places partly by electricity and partly by steam. The following statement which contains the list of only a small number of rice mills of the district gives an idea of the annual production, average daily wage per worker and total number of workers as employed by these mills in 1967-68

1 Source: Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, West Bengal.
2 Source: District Census Handbook: Birbhum, 1961.

Name of rice mill with location	*Annual production*	*Average number of daily workers*	*Average wage per worker (in rupees)*
B. B. Dutta Rice Mill (Sainthia)	9,820 quintals	78	Rs. 2.00
R. P. G. P. Chandra Rice Mill (Sainthia)	8,708 M/Tons	39	Rs 2.00
Swarup Chand Sirkar Chand Rice Mills (Sainthia)	28,000 quintals	35	Rs. 2.75
Saubhog Chand & Kapur Chand Oil & Rice Mill	45,000 ,,	45	Rs. 2.75
Sarada Rice Mill (Ahmadpur)	60,000 ,,	100	Rs 2.25
Orient Rice Mill (Ahmadpur)	54,000 ,,	70	Rs. 2.25
Ahmadpur Rice Mill of Kuchighata	20,000 ,,	80	Rs. 2.50
Sree Krishna Rice Mills, Ahmadpur	18,000 ,,	50	Rs. 2.00
Chandra Rice Mill (Ahmadpur)	30,000 ,,	64	Rs. 2.25
Nabin Rice Mill (Sainthia)	12,330 ,,	89	Rs. 2.06
B.L.D.P. Rice Mills (Murarai)	8,000 ,,	23	Rs. 2.00
Trinayani Rice Mills (Murarai)	12,000 ,,	40	Rs. 2.00
Chatra Rice Mills (Village Chatra)	6,000 ,,	40	Rs. 2.25

On the eve of the First Plan, the district had about 70 rice mills, most of them being established in the days immediately preceding the First World War. A close study[1] of the rice milling industry of Birbhum which for a long time past has been accepted as a surplus district shows that while a large number of rice mills suffers like mills in other parts of this state from acute under-utilisation of the milling capacity, the wage-earners in these mills

[1] Productivity and Profitability of Rice Milling Industry in Birbhum — Chittapriya Mukherjee (Khadigrammodyog: December, 1966).

are no better-off than the agricultural labourers, and the consumers have also failed to realise a fair deal in the form of lower prices and better quality products. On the other hand, during the last few decades, profitability of the mills has so increased that it is leading to the same type of concentration of economic power which is now a common feature in the larger sphere of our economy.

Paddy husking industries

In the pre-Independence days and as early as in 1938 it was suggested by the Land Revenue Commission that "in order to develop paddy husking in rural areas the best course would be to follow a policy of decentralization, and to introduce into the villages a simple type of husking machine which can be worked by hand. The cost of husking rice by this machine is not greater than the cost of husking in the mills."[1] The suggestion to use machines which can be worked by hand can only lead to the conclusion that the Commission did not like the idea of introducing power-driven machines apprehending that those might further displace labour quite unnecessarily and without commensurate advantage to society. By 1963, the district had 350 new and imported power-driven husking machines. Some five or six of these machines are normally regarded as equivalent to one rice mill with an average daily milling capacity of 300 to 400 maunds of rice. This means that after Independence, seventy or eighty new rice mills in addition to the already existing equal number of rice mills were to be found in the district, the husking machines being driven either by diesel or electricity. It may be added here that there has been a definite shrinkage in the secondary and tertiary occupations so far as the occupational pattern of the working population is concerned, and employment amongst females — with whom handpounding of rice was a subsidiary source of income — has gone down, both in terms of percentage and absolute number during the decade 1951-61.

Utilization of milling capacity

The study made by Hashim Amir Ali in the early thirties,[2] where analysis of the working of a representative mill in Bolpur town during 1930-31 has been made, indicates that the average purchase of paddy per year was around 66,000 to 70,000 maunds. In another study jointly made by Santipriya Bose and P. C.

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1 The Land Revenue Commission Report, Vol. I, Government of Bengal, Calcutta, 1938, p. 115.

2 Hashim Amir Ali — The Rice Industry in Lower Birbhum, Visva-Bharati Rural Studies, 1931.

Mahalanabis,[1] an idea of the extent of utilization of the milling capacity is also available, the statement below being furnished from the same source.

QUANTITY OF RICE HULLED IN RICE MILLS OF BOLPUR : SEPTEMBER 1933 TO AUGUST 1934

No. of mills	*Months worked*	*Number of hullers*	*Paddy hulled (thousand Maunds)*	*Percentage of huller utilization*
4	3	16	285	50
3	7	11	230	58.3
4	8	13	286	66.7
1	9	3	90	75
1	10	3	54	83.3
4	12	17	345	100
17	—	63	1,290	71.2

The statement indicates that the utilization of the milling capacity was much below the optimum. From recent statistics available from the Food and Supply Department of the State Government for the years 1960-63, it is also found that the rice mills of Bolpur town even now do not have a much higher rate of utilization of milling capacity as will be evident from the statement below:[2]

WORKING OF RICE MILLS OF BOLPUR 1960-63
Paddy purchase ('000 mds.)

Year	*Working mills*	*Local flow*	*Import from other States*	*Total*	*Rice milled ('000 mds)*
1960	16.8	1,154	116	1,270	808
1961	16 5	1,459	186	1,645	1,079
1962	16.3	1,298	167	1,465	954
1963	16.6	1,272	18	1,290	859
Average (1 Yr.)		1,296	122	1,418	925
Average (per mill)		78.5	..	85.8	..

[1] Santipriya Bose and P. C. Mahalanabis — Marketing of Rice at Bolpur, Visva-Bharati Rural Studies, 1936.
[2] Source. Food and Supplies Department, Government of West Bengal.

Excluding the supply of paddy from outside the State, which mainly comes from Orissa and fluctuates from year to year depending on restrictions on inter-state movement of paddy, the mills of Bolpur are seen to have maintained almost the same quantity of purchase of local paddy as in the thirties. This is mainly due to a large increase of population in the rural areas as against production in the hinterland of the town which diminished the availability of paddy for purchase and also partly due to diversion of paddy both to the husking machines in rural areas.

Khairakuri Ceramic Industries Private Ltd.

Originally, in 1960 Khairakuri Ceramic Industries Private Ltd. started at Patel Nagar in Mahammad Bazar P.S. with the object of manufacturing firebricks and potteries. The original name of the factory was Patelnagar Firebricks and Potteries Works which was later changed to its present name in October 1965. It produces low-tension electrical insulators. The raw materials, viz., China clay and felspar are taken from Rajmahal, Barakar, Kasimbazar, etc. Quartz is taken from Patel Nagar Minerals and Industries Private Ltd. The products have a good market in Calcutta. The number of daily worker engaged in this industry was 70 in 1960.

Patelnagar Minerals & Industries Private Ltd.

The area comprising Mahammad Bazar Block is very rich in minerals, which has attracted attention of new enter-preneurs lately towards industrial development on a new line. The industry was started in December 1955 at Patelnagar with a fund of one lakh of rupees which included Government loan, private loan and share capital. While raw materials are procured from mines at Mouza Khoria within 300 yards of the factory, the finished products are carried by motor trucks to Suri, Sainthia and Mollarpur, and from there by rail in wagons to different places outside the district. The factory produces China Clay, raw China Clay being washed in the washery plant to eliminate silica. The number of workers employed by the industry was 500 in 1960.

Bidi manufacturing

There is no *bidi* factory in the district where a large number of wage earners can be employed. According to Census of 1961, about 1,361 persons were engaged in this district in the manufacture of *bidi* as a household industry. Incidentally, this was the maximum number of persons engaged in a single industry, 193 being the number of female workers engaged during this period. In recent years, this industry has made a steady progress and the number of units have also increased. Some of these units are

located at Ilambazar, Mahammad Bazar, Bolpur, Nutan Amdahara, Dubrajpur, Murarai and other places.

Cottage industries which are scattered all over the district in small and distant villages provide employment to a good number of people. These include industries connected with carpentry, bamboo-and cane-products, pottery, handpounding of rice, blacksmithy, weaving of fishing net, cutlery, palm-and date-palm leaf-products, manufacturing of gur, mat-making, bidi making, manufacture of dairy products, etc., besides, such old-time industries as silk-and cotton-weaving, rearing of silk cocoons and spinning.

While no recent figures in respect of the number of units[1] and persons employed in each of these industries are available, an idea of the same may be obtained from the statement below prepared on the basis of a survey conducted by the statistical cell of the Directorate of Industries, West Bengal in 1960-62.

PERSONS EMPLOYED IN VARIOUS RURAL INDUSTRIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1960-62

Name of industry	*Number of units surveyed*	*Number of persons employed*
Hand pounding of rice	550	1073
Gur making	175	460
Bidi making	764	2434
Spinning	92	96
Weaving	2012	4030
Rearing of silk cocoons	696	1719
Silk weaving	355	1147
Mat making	136	187
Knitting of fishing net	915	791
Carpentry	1696	2528
Pottery	966	1820
Brass, Copper & Bell-metal products	166	470
Cutlery	189	315
Blacksmithy	640	1127
Bamboo-and cane-products	1321	2120
Chank industry	181	226

[1] For the purpose of the survey conducted in 1960-62 a 'Unit' means an undertaking where any type of manufacturing, repairing, assembling, servicing or processing work was done.

Silk weaving

The manufacture of silk, though covering a limited area of the district on its eastern border, was once regarded as the principal industry of Birbhum. The silk spinning and weaving at and around Ganutia, a village situated on the north bank of the river Mor, 11 miles east of Sainthia railway station in Mayureswar P.S., was once an important industry. A large factory of the Bengal Silk Company was started here by Mr. Frushard in 1786. After his death, it was taken over by the East India Company and worked by Commercial Residents till 1835, when the manufacture of silk by the East India Company came to an end. It was thereafter taken over by the Collector, and was run as a *khas mahal* till the estate was purchased by the Bengal Silk Company of Calcutta which carried the manufacture of silk in the original buildings. The factory of Frushard, renovated several times, form the most imposing mercantile edifice in Birbhum even to this day. The principal villages where mulberry silk weaving is carried on are Baswa, Vishnupur and Margram in Rampurhat P.S. The silk weaving industry is of less magnitude and importance than the silk spinning industry, but the Baswa-Vishnupur silks have more than a local repute.

An account of cocoon-rearing can be found in O'Malley's Gazetteer of 1910 which gives an idea of this industry as existed in those days. The *nistari*, the *chhota-palu* of *deshi* and the *bara-palu* were the three common varieties of mulberry silkworms. "The *bara-palu* produces a select class of beautiful cocoons, yielding a yarn which is in much demand among the best weavers: what is called *dhabi* (white) silk is made out of thread spun from white *bara-palu* cocoons. The *bara-palu* silk goes almost entirely to feed the native looms and at present there is no demand for it in the European factories. The *chhota-palu* ranks next as regards the quality of the silk it produced, but the fibre of the *nistary* silk-worm is finer and softer. On the other hand, the *nistari* cocoons yield a smaller population of silk. There are, as a rule, three crops of *nistari* and one of *chhota-palu* in the year, while the *bara-palu* which is reared in the spring, forms the greater part of the March crop *band*. The Aswin (September) crop of *chhota-palu* cocoons is of considerable importance, seeds being taken from it to other districts for the early November crop. The district is in fact a

recognized seed-rearing centre (*joar*), known as the *Rarh joar*, to which cocoon rearers resort for the purchase of good seed."[1]

In those days two kinds of mulberry were grown, viz., the *bara tunt* and the *chhota tunt*. They could be distinguished by their leaves and by the kind of soil on which they were grown. "The *chhota tunt* has palmate leaves and grows on sandy soils. The *bara tunt* has lanceolated leaves, which are also thicker and slightly rougher than those of the *chhota tunt*, and it grows on stony soil. There is this further distinction that the *bara tunt* is more suitable for the *bara-palu*, and the *chhota tunt* for the *chhota palu* silkworm; while the *nistari* is reared indifferently on both."[2] The mulberry most commonly found in those days was the *chhota tunt*. This was usually planted in raised fields, banked and ditched all round and had to be heavily manured with cowshed refuse, mud from the bottom of tanks and the remains of reeled-off cocoons. Fresh alluvium is most suitable for its cultivation as this kind of land does not require manuring for two or three years. The cocoons were either taken to the nearest *hat* for sale or killed by exposure in thin layers to the sun and reserved for sale till the arrival of the *paikars* (agents of the European filatures). Sometimes these were also steamed in a basket covered over with cloth, under which a pot of water was kept boiling and reeled off into silk. In this district the cocoon-rearers themselves generally used to spin the silk into thread by the native method of reeling. The silk thus obtained is commonly known as *Khamru*, and about 1910 the total production was about 500 maunds annually. Raw silk of a better quality was spun in filatures of which the most important centre was that at Ganutia. There was another at Bhadrapur in the north, three miles south of Nawda station (commonly known as Lohapur) on the branch railway from Nalhati to Azimganj. "These filatures all use steam for damping the cocoons, heating the water in which they float during reeling, and drying the silk."[3] In addition to these filatures, there were numerous spindles in the houses of the villagers, particularly in Baswa and Bishnupur under Rampurhat P.S., and Palsa in the police station of Murarai. The fabrics produced were usually plain price-goods, the common variety made by the weavers when working independently

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[1] L.S.S.O'Malley — Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta. 1910, p. 73.
[2] Loc. cit
[3] ibid., p. 74.

being *kora* which was a kind of inferior silk, thin and rough, and not glossy and soft like ordinary silk, but stiff and hard like cotton stuff. But while working on commission for the European firms with a supply of well spun silk, these weavers were quite capable of turning out quality fabrics. The list of products included *dhotis* and *saris* with printed and plain borders, silk pieces (*thans*) 10 yards and 7 yards long, and handkerchiefs. These were mostly sold locally and sometimes exported also to other parts of the province through agents.

In the early thirties, the weaving of mulberry silk engaged about 400 families in the Rampurhat Subdivision, each family having on an average two looms. The principal cloths woven was *chadar*, long *saris*, turbans, and *thans* for coating and suitings. The use of dye-stuffs were not known to these weavers in those days and the finished fabrics were decidedly inferior to those made at Murshidabad. The silk yarn from which the fabrics were made could be chiefly obtained from the district of Malda and occasionally from the neighbouring villages of Gaffail, Joypur and Dangapara and other places where the mulberry silkworm was reared and the spinning of waste silk was carried on. The villagers living in the tract from Ganutia to Tilpara in Bolpur on both sides of the Mor river were engaged in rearing the silk-worm and making yarn, some of which they used to sell. Cloths, woven by the rest of the local weavers, were sold in Murshidabad and Calcutta. Normally, in a day of 10 working hours, a weaver with the help of 3 assistants (women and children generally) could weave 8 to 10 *cubits* of silk cloth, earning Re. 1 to Rs. 1-8 as wages. The average income of a weaver, or more correctly of a weaver's family was Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 per month in those days. These weavers were very hardworking and there was no holiday for them. In this connexion, the following paragraph gives an idea of the weaving trade of those days, "The *mahajan*, who lives near a central place where this industry is carried on, is generally well off. He supplies the weavers with raw material and collects the finished products, allowing the worker *bani* or wage on each piece of work. The finished goods are sent to Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore and other places where the *mahajan* has connection with firms dealing in these goods. There are, however, a few weavers who work independently, and dispose of their goods at the nearest marts, or to the *beparis* who visit the localities occasionally. The reason of the reported decline of this industry seems to be the want of organization amongst the weavers who in

consequence of their poverty cannot stock their goods and send them to more favourable places for sale as the *mahajans* do"[1]

In the Labhpur area, silk weaving was located in the villages of Bhabkuti, Abadanga, Bholas and Duarki on a small scale. A co-operative Society formed at Abadanga to finance this industry failed owing to organizational weakness.

According to official figures of 1950, about 830 acres of land were under mulberry cultivation. It was also estimated in the same year that the number of silk weaving establishments in Birbhum was 600, employing 978 handlooms. It has already been stated that the *Kora* is the usual type of silk turned out by the weavers, where the raw silk is not bleached at all. "The silk is simply re-reeled and then warped and woven with weft. In some cases, the warp is doubled and the weft doubled or trebled according to the deniers of the silk used. In other cases, single warp is used, but the weft is doubled or trebled as the case may be. In this process of *Kora* weaving, the winding and doubling and preparing the warp and other processes are done by the washermen, and the dyeing and printing by separate organizations of dyer and printers."[1] According to an estimate of 1950, Birbhum had an annual production of 9,14,400 yards of silk cloth. Baswa and Vishnupur specialised in *Kora thans* for printed *saris* and dress-pieces, each of 12 yards length and 45" width, and turban cloths, 9 yards long and 40" wide.

According to a survey conducted by the statistical cell of the Directorate of Industries, there were 696 units for rearing of silk cocoons in 1960-62 providing employment to 1,719 persons. The total number of units for reeling of silk for the same period was 38, engaging 150 persons in that particular trade, while the total number of silk weaving units was 355 providing employment to 1,167 persons.

Tussar weaving

The weaving of *tussar* is carried on in a small scale in the villages of the district, the most important of which are Birsinghpur, Malipur, Karidhya, Tantipara and Ilambazar. In the early thirties, there were about 500 weavers at Tantipara who used to weave *tussar* and occasionally cotton. In the villages of Karidhya and Malipur, there were approximately 400 looms in those days of which about half the number were employed is weaving *tussar*. In the past, cocoons were usually brought from

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[1] Report on the Survey of Cotton Industries in Bengal (Second Edition), Calcutta, 1929. p. 15.

the western jungles, where they were reared by the tribals or gathered from the forest trees. As the quality of cocoons gathered or reared in the district was not sufficient to meet the demand, the weavers had to depend on the supply from the Santal Parganas, Singhbhum and such other places. The cocoons, having passed into the weavers' hands, were reeled and woven into *dhotis*, *saris* and *thans*, 10 yards in length and could be dyed, if required.

In the early thirties, the *tussar* weavers were found to be comparatively well off than the silk and cotton weavers, the average monthly income being a little more than that of the latter. The weaver was usually helped in his work by the women and children of his family, and they could weave a *sari*, 9 cubits long, in one day. The raw material was procured from the markets of Dumka, Chaibasa, Jamtara and other places. The *beparis* (hawkers) also used to visit the villages carrying *tussar* cocoons with them for sale. The supply was however seldom regular. The finished products, which were chiefly *saris*, *dhotis*, *chadars* and cloth for making dress were sold in the local market, the orthodox Hindu villagers being inclined to wear *tussar* silk during their religious and matrimonial and other ceremonies.

Cotton weaving

Cotton weaving, an old-time industry of the district, has declined for many years past owing to the import of cheaper machine-made cloth. Coarse cotton cloth is woven in many villages and the product finds a market among the cultivating and labouring classes. Finer cloths, such as, twills, table cloths, *purdahs*, bed sheets, and cloth for coats and shirts are made at Bolpur, Suri Karidhya, Tantipara, Panchiara, Murarai, Nalhati, Rampurhat, Dubrajpur and Sien. In 1940, the number of weaving families of the district was estimated at 3,569 and the number of workers at 5,527. The monthly production was estimated at 2,37,180 yards, and the annual production at 28,46,160 yards. Birbhum was reported to consume approximately 7,11,540 lbs. of yarn in a year. The number of fly-shuttle looms was estimated at 2,108 and the number of throw shuttle looms at 1,541 making a total of 3,649. In the middle of 1953, there were 140 weavers' co-operative societies, of which 102 were limited and 2 unlimited liability societies, the total membership standing at 3,329, but none of these societies was in a flourishing condition. In 1960-

[1] Source: Census 1951, District Hand books: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1954. p. XIIV.

62, there were 2,012 weaving units in the district providing employment to 4,030 persons.

The following statement shows the progress of handloom weaving at the Suri Industrial Centre, Suri for the years 1964-67:

HANDLOOM WEAVING IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT UNDER THE CO-OPERATIVE FOLD. 1964-67[1]

Year	*Number of looms*	*Quantity (in meters)*	*Value (in Rs.)*
1964-65	879	25,509	35,433
1965-66	1,091	31,055	53,498
1966-67	1,258	39,272	85,210

The number of looms outside the co-operative fold and quantity of cloths produced for the period under reference is shown below:

HANDLOOM WEAVING IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT OUTSIDE THE CO-OPERATIVE FOLD: 1964-67

Year	*Number of looms*	*Quantity (in meters)*
1964-65	5,173	65,79,000
1965-66	5,482	68,80,988
1966-67	5,596	70,18,212

While pit looms, frame looms and semi-automatic looms are usually employed for weaving cloths and other products, no powerloom can be seen anywhere in the district. Artisans, dependent upon this industry, normally work with pit looms and with yarn 40 S to 60 S. Some weavers residing at Sukbazar area of Ilambazar Block, according to available reports, are technically able to work with Doby and Jacquard machine and can prepare even *Kalki sari* which is now being treated as a fashionable *sari* in women's attire.

Even today, the economic condition of these weavers are not very satisfactory, mainly, owing to the fact that they are still living in the grip of private traders, who generally supply yarn to them. The artisans get only normal wages in exchange for

[1] Source: Handloom Development Officer, Suri (Birbhum).

finished price-goods produced through a hard-and day-long labour. These weavers again are not very much acquainted with the processing activities of fast colouring of handloom products and sometimes it is also found that they are not able to produce quality products of handloom goods, for which they are experiencing difficulties to dispose of their products in the market at competitive rates.

Handicrafts

The handicrafts of the district consist of the lacquer craft of Ilambazar which is now almost extinct and bamboo-and cane-products, palm-and date leaf-products, embroidery, *shola pith* products and image making. To these products should be added the quality leather goods of Sriniketan which have great demand far beyond the borders of the district and in foreign markets as well. These items of manufacture include cushion cover, shopping bag, ladies' handbag and *mora* with leather top, purse and ladies' purse.

Visva Bharati Silpa Bhavan

Visva Bharati Shilpa Bhavan which is one of the most successful weaving establishments in the State has made numerous experiments in weaving with fine yarn and new kind of weaves, specially with Assamese and Manipuri types of handlooms. It has also made bold experiments in printing and dyeing. The greatest success, however, has been in the introduction of new designs, patterns and colours. This institution has also a very good collection of traditional patterns, designs and borders, and through a series of new experiments which are still being made, the institution at present holds the monopoly of taste and artistic effect. The institution has at present a large market all over India and in foreign countries as well.

Lacquer works

It has already been stated that the village Ilambazar was once famous for manufacture of artistic and skillful lacquer works and at one time about 200 families were dependent upon this industry for their livelihood. The main items of production were lac-toys, lac-fruits, lac-boxes, etc. Owing to financial limitations and lack of organised efforts to help disposal of the goods in outside markets, the artisans depending upon this industry were forced to engage themselves in other establishments for alternative jobs. Mention may be made in this connection of Sri Gopal Chandra Guin who is still engaged in this industry and who was until recently the teacher of Sriniketan Craft Industries' Training Centre under Visva Bharati University. Sri Guin, an expert and skilled artisan with his experience of long thirty-five years in this line, still feels that revival of this

industry is possible with the help of young, interested and trained artisans in this craft under proper planning and with adequate financial assistance from Government. The implements used in the toy-making craft are mostly fabricated by the artisans themselves. An earthen pot to contain sal-wood charcoal which is used for melting the lacquer, three bamboo sticks tied to each other on which the pot is placed, a hollow bamboo pipe to blow the fire with, a square wooden plank, a flat-tipped wooden spoon, a knife having a blunt blade which the artisans call 'chair', a pair of tongs and a handle to drop molten lacquer are all the tools that are required. Lacquer sticks of various colour are turned round and round over the charcoal fire until they get the right degree of malleability when pieces are taken off and pressed with fingers into desired shapes. The faces, torsos and limbs are shaped separately and then joined together to form the whole. Slender tapes of coloured lacquer are fixed on them to define the pair, eyebrows, moustaches, jewellery and edges of apparels, etc. Drops of coloured lacquer are used to form the eyeballs, nose and ear-ornaments, buttons and the like.

Lokpur Bowls

Lokpur bowls which are also known as Birbhum bowls top the list of indigenous handicrafts of the district. Seven sets of these bowls or *pais* made by the master craftsman Sri Kamala Kanta Karmakar of Lokpur won the first prize in the All India Handicraft Competition of 1955-56. Wood is curved in the shape of *pais* (previously used for measuring rice, *chira*, etc.), bound and ornamented with brass, which gives them a handsome appearance. Present use of Lokpur bowls has been for table decoration only. Lakshmipur or Lokpur is a village in Khoyrasol P.S., about 6 miles south of Rajnagar. At present, there are 5 Karmakar families engaged in this trade. These products are much in demand for the export market. The average production rate is 3 set *pais* per artisan per month. They are of various sizes, from 10 *seers* down to 1 *chatak*, and are made in sets. One set is sold at a price varying between Rs. 100 and Rs. 120, depending upon the quality of ornamental decoration. The raw materials required in this craft are wood and Bell-metal scraps and it is not much difficult to procure these materials locally. There is another village, Nachan Shalying at a distance of 6 miles from Sriniketan, where similar works are also done.

Conch shell products

Coloured conch shell bangles constitute a speciality of Birbhum. There is a concentration of conch shell artisans at Karidhya, Mahammad Bazar, Nalhati and Bolpur. According to the 1961

Census, the number of artisans engaged in the craft at that time was 120 with an average income ranging from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 per artisan per month. Good quality chanks are not to be found in the district and very recently the Industries Department of the State Government have decided to arrange supply of quality chanks to individual artisans.

Manufacture of boots and shoes

In the early thirties there were about 100 *charmakars* (*muchis*) in the village of Tantipara and an equal number in the Suri town, who could make excellent boots and shoes to order. Most of the footwear would find a ready local sale, although a portion of it would go to Calcutta merchants for disposal. The greater portion of the leather was imported from Calcutta. The *charmakars* could also tan some of their leather according to local methods for the manufacture of slippers, etc., required by the cultivators and other working people. According to the survey made by the Industries Department of the State Government during 1960-62, about 160 persons were employed for making shoes, bags, etc. in 110 units, while there were 278 units for repairing shoes, etc. employing 312 persons. Besides, 114 persons were engaged in the work of flaying and tanning in 66 units.[1]

Training-Cum production-Centre, Suri

In this connection, mention may be made of the Training-cum production-Centre located at Suri which was established in 1957 for upliftment of the *charmakars*. This centre does two-fold functions. While imparting training to the unskilled cobblers of the locality on the modern lines regarding manufacture of footwear and other leather goods, it also provides employment to the ex-trainees of this Centre in the production wing attached to it, where they are given good facilities to earn for their livelihood. Up to 1960, about 45 students received training and the Centre has also helped to reduce unemployment among the cobblers of the locality. Most of the ex-trainees were also provided with work in the established footwear concerns of the locality as well as in Government establishments.

Mat-Making

Mat-making is an important cottage industry of the district, the trade being confined to the poorer section of people. Some local Muslims are also very expert in this work. Mat, which is prepared out of nut leaf, has a good market in the district and in the neighbouring areas. The monthly income of the person

[1] Source: Total Number of Industrial Units and their Employment in West Bengal, 1960-62: Statistical Cell, Directorate of Industries, West Bengal. p. 4.

engaged in this industry was between Rs. 25 and Rs. 30 in 1960.

Bamboo & cane products

Some poorer sections of people are expert in making bamboo goods, such as, baskets, birds' cages, fans, etc., and in most cases, this work is the only source of their livelihood. A man engaged in this trade could earn about Rs 15 or Rs. 20 per month in 1950. There is little local demand for these goods at present.

Brass and bell-metal

Brass and bell-metal wares are made in many villages and the most skilled workers of this trade mostly live in Dubrajpur and Nalhati. They turn out bell-metal articles of a better finish, which find a ready market outside the district. The brass utensils and pots of Ilambazar, Tikarbetha and Hazratpur are also deemed to be of a superior quality. In the early fifties, the products turned out by the Nalhati Karmakar Cooperative Society were of a superior quality and could hold their own with those prepared in Khagra, Murshidabad where the best bell-metal workers of West Bengal were to be found. In 1960-62, there were altogether 1,321 units in the district employing 2,120 persons. The artisans, depending upon this industry, are compelled to buy the controlled items of raw materials, such as, copper, zinc, tin, etc. from private traders, because often they fail to get their quota of raw materials from Government. This dependence on private traders or village *mahajans* as they are commonly called and the high prices of these metals are detering the growth and development of this industry in rural areas. Besides, the cheap alluminium products have occupied some place in the market and slowly but very steadily pushing out bell-metal products from the market.

State aid to industries

A sum of Rs. 400 as loan can be sanctioned to an artisan or trader by the Block Development Officer within his jurisdiction. The District Industrial Officer also sanctions to small enterpreneurs of the district a loan varying from Rs. 400 to Rs. 2,000. At the district level, the District Magistrate also sanctions loans up to a sum of Rs. 10,000 for development of various industries within the district. The following statement shows the extent of loan distributed by him during the period from 1963-64 to 1967-68.

Loans distributed from the office of the District Magistrate, Birbhum under the Bengal State Aid to Industries' Loans Act during 1963-64 to 1967-68 are shown below.[1]

[1] Source: District Industrial Officer, Birbhum.

Year	Amount of loan distributed Rs.	Nature of Industries	No. of units benefited
1963-64	66,400	Brick manufacturing, Carpentry,	18
1964-65	29,700	Blacksmithy, etc.	7
1965-66	20,400		5
1966-67	44,100	Grinding, Brick manufacturing, Cycle repairing, Blacksmithy, installation of pumps, repairing, etc.	12
1967-68	16,960	Brick manufacturing, Shoe making, Carpentry, Tile manufacturing, Rope industry, etc.	14

West Bengal Khadi & Village Industries Board

The West Bengal Khadi and Village Industries Board also disbursed loans and grants in recent years under various schemes relating to village industries. A sum of Rs. 22,566 was paid as grant and Rs. 11,282 as loan to various co-operative societies for development of Khadi weaving. Between 1963-64 and 1965-66 a further sum of Rs. 22,566 was sanctioned as grant for the same purpose. During the period from 1960-61 to 1965-66, a total of Rs. 10,853 was given as grant and Rs. 37,875 as loan to different co-operative societies of the district for development of hand pounding of rice industry.[1] For the purpose of helping the village oil industry, a sum of Rs. 23,187 was sanctioned as loan between 1961-62 and 1965-66. Besides, loans and grants were also paid to the various co-operative societies of the district for development of cane *gur* and date-palm products, village leather goods and the like.

Labour unrest

In recent years, labour unrest was neither extensive nor frequent in the district. Between 1963 and 1968 a total of 6 cases was recorded for settlement. The cases originated mainly from demands of better wages, bonus and other amenities as also from protests against dismissal of workers. The statement below gives particulars of work stoppages in the registered factories of the district from 1963 to 1968 (Calender year).[2]

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[1] Source: Executive Officer, West Bengal Khadi and Village Industries Ltd.

[2] Source: Deputy Labour Commissioner (Statistics), West Bengal.

LABOUR DISPUTES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1963-68

Year	*Nature of work stoppages*	*No. of strike*	*Causes*	*Method of settlement*	*Results*
1963	Strike	1	dismissal	Conciliation	Successful
1964	,,	13	demand for wages	Bipartite	,,
1965	,,	1	dismissal	Unconditional resumption	Unsuccessful
1966	Nil	—	—	—	—
1967	Strike	1	assault on the driver by the public	Conciliation	Indefinite
1968	Strike	2	demand for Puja bonus & non-payment of arrear wages	Bipartite	Successful

WELFARE INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

The registered factories of the district are governed by the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act of 1948. There is one Inspector of Minimum Wages for the areas of Birbhum and Purulia districts, and the Durgapur and Asansol Subdivisions of the Burdwan District. The Inspector of Minimum Wages tours all areas allotted to him for inspection of various industrial units governed by the provisions of the Act. He is authorised to issue notices to the management where necessary, in case of violation of the provisions of the Act and is also competent to file prosecution cases and claim cases under Section 20 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for recovery of arrear dues wherever it is felt necessary.

An Inspector of Minimum Wages was appointed for the areas of Birbhum and Purulia Districts and the Asansol Subdivision during the period from 3 September 1965 to 28 September 1967. But no case of violation of the provisions of the Act was reported during this period.

There is no Labour Welfare Centre at present in the district of Birbhum.

LABOUR AND EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATION

While there was no Employers' Organization in the district up to 1968, there were 40 workers' unions which were registered under the Indian Trade Union Act of 1926. The largest union was Bolpur Dhankal Mazdoor Union with 695 members. These Workers' Unions were mostly affiliated to the various political organizations such as United Trade Union Congress, Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, etc. A statement showing the registered trade unions in the district of Birbhum is given at the end of this Chapter in Appendix B.

INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL AND PLANS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Industries do not have any significant role in the economic life of the district. With the gradual decline of cottage industries, more and more people have taken to cultivation to earn their livelihood. The present endeavour of the Government is, therefore, to develop as many as the old-time rural crafts as possible side by side with new industries where more and more people can be conveniently employed. Manufacturing employment is maximum in the areas where rice mills are located. With the modernization of the plants, it may be possible to employ more workers in the rice mills. Proper arrangement for bank finance is expected to help economically the 2,000 families of weavers operating in the district. At present, the weavers are mostly wage earners, the weaving industry being owned by some influential outside organizations. There are graduates and matri-

culates in the weavers' families and these educated men can be trained up for running co-operative societies with adequate financial aid from the Government. The area comprising Mahammad Bazar is very rich in minerals. There are two small deposits of quartz and felspar near Raspur and Kadirganj in this police station. A black stone suitable as road ballast and concrete chips is also found in the district. Proper utilization of these resources may help the local people to get gainful employment.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF ELECTRIFIED TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT (AS ON 30 JUNE 1969)

Places Electrified	*Police Station*	*Date of Electrification*
A. *Towns*		
1) Bolpur	Bolpur	1.9.41
2) Dubrajpur	Dubrajpur	1.9.56
3) Nalhati	Nalhati	8.10.56
4) Rampurhat	Rampurhat	8.10.56
5) Sainthia	Sainthia	21.10.55
B. *Villages*		
1) Abdarpur	Suri	1961
2) Ahmedpur	Sainthia	22.10.55
3) Andanbari	Dubrajpur	1.6.57
4) Angargaria	Mahammad Bazar	3.8.55
5) Anua	Sainthia	25.3.61
6) Asatganja	Dubrajpur	1.6.57
7) Baguti	Rampurhat	8.10.56
8) Bakreswar	Dubrajpur	19.11.58
9) Baruipur	Ilambazar	12.9.68
10) Basea	Rampurhat	12.4.65
11) Begali	"	1968
12) Bhagabatipur	Sainthia	22.10.55
13) Bhaluka	Dubrajpur	29.1.68
14) Chatra	Murarai	15.3.68
15) Chunpalasi	Ilambazar	11.2.69
16) Dharampur	"	13.2.69
17) Faiyimullabav	Sainthia	21.10.55
18) Gangapur	Ilambazar	12.2.69

(*contd.*)

Places Electrified	*Police Station*	*Date of Electrification*
19) Hetampur	Dubrajpur	1.6.57
20) Ichapur	Ilambazar	12.2.69
21) Iswarpur	Sainthia	22.10.55
22) Kalipur	Suri	31.3.59
23) Kamalpur	„	1956
24) Kayers	Ilambazar	13.2.69
25) Kendua	Suri	1968
26) Kharia	Mahammad Bazar	5.1.67
27) Khesnator	Suri	24.2.69
28) Khoerbari	Ilambazar	11.9.68
29) Karidhya	Suri	24.2.59
30) Kirnahar	Nanoor	10.11.60
31) Komarpukur	Mahammad Bazar	1955
32) Kondala	Dubrajpur	1.6.57
33) Kuchinghata	Sainthia	22.10.55
34) Labhpur	Labhpur	9.12.59
35) Mahugram	„	9.12.59
36) Margram	Rampurhat	15.4.64
37) Mirzapur	Ilambazar	11.9.66
38) Muradhihi	Sainthia	1965
39) Nagdighi	Nanoor	1965
40) Naoga	Ilambazar	11.2.69
41) Nirma	Nanoor	Dec. 1963
42) Nischintapur	Rampurhat	8.10.56
43) Paschimdurgapur	Sainthia	18.11.58
44) Pandua	Dubrajpur	14.9.68
45) Parota	Nanoor	10.11.60
46) Payet	Ilambazar	12 9.68
47) Purandarpur	Mahammad Bazar	19.10.66
48) Rajyadharpur	„	3.8.55
49) Ramnagar	Ilambazar	11 2.69
50) Sasakuri	Mahammad Bazar	1965
51) Sultanpur	Suri	19.10.66
52) Talpara	„	1958
53) Tikarbata	Ilambazar	15.9.68
54) Uttarkone	„	1.2.69
55) Vishnupur	Rampurhat	12.4.65

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT SHOWING THE REGISTERED TRADE UNIONS IN THE DISTRICT OF BIRBHUM (AS ON OCTOBER 1968)

Sl. No.	*Date of Registration*	*Name of the Union*	*Address*	*Affiliation*	*Membership*
1.	26.6.56	Birbhum Rice and Oil Mills' Labour Union	P.O. Murarai	UTUC	353
2.	14.9.57	Birbhum District Rice Mills' Association	P.O. Bolpur	B.N.C.C.I. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce & Industry)	64
3.	11.12.57	Birbhum Zilla Dhan O Telkal Mazdoor Samity	P.O. Bolpur	UTUC	125
4.	12.3.58	Birbhum Rickshaw Workers' Union	P.O. Suri	UTUC	250
5.	20.6.58	Bolpur Municipal Employees' Association	Bolpur	WBMEF	144
6.	14.7.58	Birbhum Motor Workers' Association	Suri	UTUC	329
7.	2.1.59	Nalhati Dokan Karmachari Samity	P.O. Nalhati	—	51
8.	22.4.59	Birbhum Press Workers' Union	Suri	No party	50
9.	6.11.59	Bolpur Dhankal Mazdoor Union	P.O. Bolpur	UTUC	695
10.	11.11.59	Birbhum Cinema Workers' Union	Suri,	UTUC	228
11.	27.6.60	Raigaon Stone Co. Labour Union	Bhadiswar, P.O. Murarai	UTUC	309
12.	25.8.60	Dokan Karmachari Samity, Sainthia	Sainthia	BPTUC	125
13.	23.9.60	Bolpur Rickshaw Workers' Association	Bolpur	BPTUC	255
14.	5.11.60	Birbhum Bidi Mazdoor Union	Suri	UTUC	300
15.	23.2.61	National Sugar Mill Workers' Union	C/O. K. P. Singha Ray, P.O. Bolpur	BPTUC	221
16.	17.3.61	Bidi Mazdoor Union	C/O Dr. Saradish Roy, Suri	BPTUC	109
17.	12.4.61	Suri Municipal Bazar Byabasayee Samity	Suri	BPTUC	226
18.	12.5.61	Dubrajpur Thana Bibi Karigar Union	Islampur, P.O. Dubrajpur	BPTUC	150
19.	2.6.61	Stone Breakers' & Crushers' Union	Bhadiswar; P.O. Murarai	UTUC	46
20.	26.9.61	Sainthia Thana Bidi Karigar Union	C/O. Bijoy Dey, Rajnagore	BPTUC	20

(Contd.)

Sl. No.	Date of Registration	Name of the Union	Address	Affiliation	Membership
21.	11.8.62	Ajoy Valley Colliery Workers' Union	Sonatarpara; P.O. Suri	No. party	60
22.	7.3.63	Murarai Dokan Karmachari Sangha	Murarai Bazar, Murarai	No party	51
23.	10.1.64	Bolpur Tailors' Association	P.O. Bolpur	No party	199
24.	23.7.64	Suri Municipal Workers' Union	P.O. Suri	UTUC	90
25.	23.7.64	Birbhum Clay Mines Fire Bricks & Potteries Workers' Union	Johara Manzil, Suri	UTUC	50
26.	1.4.66	Bolpur Bidi Sramik Union	Bolpur	No party	230
27.	20.4.66	Birbhum Oil & Rice Mill Mazdoor Union	P.O. Sainthia	,,	109
28.	25.6.66	Dubrajpur Thana Rickshaw Union	P.O. Dubrajpur	INTUC	100
29.	21.3.67	Suri Dokan Karmachari Samity	Suri	No party	80
30.	17.4.67	Rampurhat Sub-Div. Motor Transport Workers' Union	Nichintapur Rampurhat	,,	12
31.	6.7.67	Mallarpur Bidi Mazdoor Union	Mallarpur	,,	58
32.	6.9.67	Mallarpur Dokan Karmachari Union	-do-	,,	61
33.	7.8.67	Birbhum District Tailoring Mazdoor Union	Johora Manzil, Suri	UTUC	60
34.	7.8.67	Sahebganj Loop Rail Sramik Union	Murarai	UTUC	18
35.	19.8.67	Niramoy T. B. Sanatorium Employees' Union	Giridanga, P.O. Niramoy	No party	176
36.	20.9.67	Narayanpur Bidi Workers' Union	Balia Mrityunjaypur, Narayangange	INTUC	239
37.	20.9.67	Maleswar Weaving Factory Workers' Union	Mallarpur	INTUC	50
38.	4.1.68	The Birbhum Dist. Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. Employees' Union	Suri	UTUC	51
39.	26.6.68	Mayurakshi Cotton Mills Workers' Union	P.O. Panchra, Panchrahat	No party	63
40.	5.7.68	Suri Municipal Employees' Association	Municipal Office, Suri	WBMEF	142

CHAPTER VI

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

BANKING AND FINANCE

History of indigenous banking in the district

The earliest reference to the existence of a system of banking in this region, as traceable in Kavikankan Mukundaram's *Chandimangal*, a work of *circa* A.D. 1600, relates to the activities of a "class of shroff usually called poddars, who exchanged cowries (shells) and silver coins, the usual currency of a Bengal market." "They acted as bankers and money-changers, and remitted money for others from one town to another and issued letters of exchange."[1] They had cornered the bulk of the specie of the land and operated a network of houses in almost every part of the country.[2] The Bengal District records of the 18th century show that revenue was not paid by the zemindars to the officers of the East India Company direct, but was collected through the agency of these shroffs. As losses due to misappropriation by the middlemen in various ways was inherent in the system, it was abolished in 1778.

"The East India Company as a trading concern had a monopoly of the silk industry in Birbhum. Its affairs were managed by the Commercial Resident at Surul, about 20 miles from Suri. Besides the Commercial Resident, who was a paid servant, there was also a Commercial Agent The latter worked with his own capital, and the company paid only for the produce received, thereby incurring no risk."[3] The heavy drafts made by the Resident, Mr. Cheap, on the Treasury at Suri, which at times was unable to meet them on demand, shows that the silk industry in the district in the early years was on a large scale.[4] The large silk factory at Ganutia founded by Mr. Frushard towards the end of the eighteenth century (after his services as Superintendent of the Company's silk work were terminated, but the company permitted him to erect a silk filature on his own account), and Erskine & Co.'s indigo and lac factories in the

[1] Mukundaram *Kavikankan Chandi* (ed. Srikumar Bandyopadhyaya and Biswapati Chowdhury). Vol. I Calcutta, 1952. pp. 30, 292. Also Dwijamadhav—*Mangal-Chandi Geet* (ed. Subhibhusan Bhattacharyya). Calcutta, 1965. p. 76.

[2] Narendra Krishna Sinha The Economic History of Bengal (Vol. I). Calcutta, 1961. p. 144.

[3] F. G Drake-Brockman—Notes on the Early Administration of the District of Birbhum, Calcutta, 1898 p. 26.

[4] ibid.

vicinity of Ilambazar were conducted under European management and by means of European capital,[1] although details of the amount of capital employed in the large silk factory at Ganutia, etc. are lacking. The firm of Erskine & Co. had in 1872 eighteen working factories (indigo) in different districts of which eight were located in Birbhum and the total amount of floating capital employed yearly in working these eight factories varied from £ 3,300 to £ 4,500, according to the season.[2] Messrs Erskine & Co. estimated the total value of the manufacturers in Ilambazar and neighbourhood, including indigo, shellac, lac-dye, *tusar*, silk and lacquer work, etc. at about £ 18,500, of which imported capital amounted for £ 9,000 and the rest to the native capital.[3] This, of course, does not include the native manufactured indigo, the value of which were estimated at from £ 5,000 to £ 6,000 per annum.[4]

Writing in 1876, Hunter reports that in the absence of large banking establishments in the district, the cultivators had to borrow from village shop-keepers who combined rice-dealing with money-lending.[5] As regards the then prevailing rates of interest, he mentioned on the authority of the Collector of the district that in small transactions where the loans were secured by means of ornaments or household utensils, the rate of interest was two pice (3 paise) per month for every rupee borrowed or 37½ per cent per annum.[6] In large transactions, loans secured by a mortgage upon houses or lands, the rate varied from 18 to 24 per cent per annum.[7] Loans were not usually advanced against security of moveable property.[8] Agricultural advances to the cultivators were made in the shape of grains for a short period of three months or so or till harvest and recovered at the time of harvest in grains together with interest at the rate of 25 per cent.[9]

Rural indebtedness

It has been aptly said about the Bengali cultivator that he "is born in debt, increases his debt throughout his life and dies more hopelessly in debt than ever."[10] According to the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, the agriculturists of the

1 E. G. Drake-Brockman - op. cit., W. W. Hunter--A Statistical Account of Bengal, (Vol. IV). London, 1876. p. 381.
2,4 W. W. Hunter—ibid., p. 382.
5 ibid., p. 381.
6-9 W. W. Hunter—ibid., p. 381.
10 Report of the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, 1929-30. Vol. I. p. 74.

district obtained their finance from (i) professional money-lenders, (ii) non-cultivating proprietors of holdings, (iii) traders, (iv) co-operative credit societies, (v) landlords and (vi) taccavi loans under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. But the debts, according to the evidence of the witnesses before the committee, were mostly due to the professional money-lenders and a very small portion of it to the co-operative banks.[1] Usually, grain-debts were incurred for subsistence during the period from the growing of paddy and its marketing, while cash-debts were for the purchase of agricultural implements and manures. The Report mentioned only one grain bank at Paikor, but its activities were insignificant compared to the needs of the locality. Consequently, it could not exert any influence in softening the prevailing high rate of interest.[2]

According to the same source the percentages of secured and unsecured loans were about 75 and 25 respectively.[3] Paddy loans usually carried interest at the rate of 50 per cent half-yearly (that is, for the period from August-September to January-February), while unsecured cash debts at the rate of one anna per rupee per month which worked out to 75 per cent per annum.[4] Secured cash debts carried various rates of interest, the minimum being 25 per cent per annum.[5] Kabuli money-lenders lent small amounts at rates as high as 2 annas per rupee per month or 150 per cent per annum.[6] The usual rates of interest charged by the co-operative societies varied from 12½ per cent to 15⅝ per cent per annum.[7] But the role played by this source was very insignificant. In the opinion of the witnesses, agricultural indebtedness was on the increase.[8] This is borne out by the fact that the average debt of members to the co-operative societies alone rose from Rs. 50 in 1928-29 to Rs. 150 in 1969-70, while membership rose from 20,739 to 67,778 during the same period.

The report of the Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati on resurvey of the village of Sahajapur under Bolpur P.S. of this district makes certain interesting revelations as

[1] ibid., Vol. II, Part I, p. 738.
[2] ibid., pp. 572-73.
[3] ibid., pp. 656, 737, 805.
[4] ibid., pp. 320, 572-73, 739.
[5] ibid., pp. 572-3.
[6] ibid., pp. 324, 657.
[7] ibid., pp. 572-73.
[8] ibid., pp. 658, 738, 784.

regards the extent and incidence of indebtedness, purposes, sources of borrowings and rates of interest thereof. The table at Appendix-A of this chapter shows that in respect of the extent and incidence of indebtedness the village recorded an improvement during the period 1956-61.[1]

The analysis of the relevant table by occupation groups shows that the cultivators of land wholly/mainly owned and the rent-receivers made distinct improvement so far as these two aspects are concerned, while the position of others deteriorated. This is due to the significant improvement shown by the former groups in respect of increase in income, while the latter groups have shown a decline. Distribution of old and current cash debts by purpose shows that in 1956 consumption credit formed 47.4 per cent of the total debts, while in 1961 this item accounted for 54.6 per cent. Productive credit likewise shows a slight increase from 41.3 per cent in 1956 to 45.4 per cent in 1961. An indication of the improvement in the level of enterprise of the cultivators of land wholly/mainly owned is betrayed by the fact that a greater portion of their loans were spent for productive purposes. The analysis of debts by source too betrays a marked change for the better, as is evident from the table[2] at Appendix-B of this Chapter. The lesser dependence of borrowers on private money lenders is borne out by the fact that in 1956, 92.4 per cent of the debt was due to them and the rest (7.6 per cent) to the Government, while the respective figures in 1961 were 54.6 per cent and 31.2 per cent, and the rest, that is, 14.2 per cent was to the co-operative credit society which started functioning in 1960. Institutional sources thus came to play an important role in the system of agricultural finance by meeting the credit need of the villagers. Its resultant impact is again felt on the distribution of borrowings and debts by rate of interest during the period 1956-61, as is indicated by the table below.

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[1] Madan Gopal Ghosh—Studies in Rural Change, Sahajapur, West Bengal, A Report on Resurvey of a village, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva Bharati, 1966, table 5,6. p. 66.

[2] ibid., table 5.9-10, pp. 69-70.

DISTRIBUTION OF BORROWINGS AND DEBTS BY RATE OF INTEREST IN SAHAJAPUR VILLAGE DURING 1956-61[1]

Rate of interest per annum	1956 Old debts (cash) Rs.	% to total	1956 Current debts (cash) Rs.	% to total	1961 Old debts (cash) Rs.	% to total	1961 Current debts (cash) Rs.	% to total
0 (without interest)	567	25.6	1057	28.5	500	26.3	1187	29.0
5.00-12.50	377	16.9	180	4.9	280	14.7	2440	59.7
12.51-18.75	303	13.6	120	3.2	160	8.4	—	—
18.76-25.00	269	12.2	30	0.8	300	15.8	270	6.6
25.01-37.50	180	8 1	257	6.9	360	18.9	190	4.7
37.51-75.00	523	23.6	220	5.9	300	15.8	—	—
Above 75°	—	—	23	0.6	—	—	—	—
Unspecified	—	—	1823	49.2	—	—	—	—
Total	2219	100.0	3710	100.0	1900	100.0	4087	100.0

Transactions in cash or kind between private credit agencies (excluding commercial banks) and agriculturists are now regulated by the Bengal Money-lenders Act of 1940, which requires every money-lender to obtain a licence valid for 3 years from appropriate authorities, maintain a cash-book, ledger, and a receipt book and observe other relevant formalities. Under the Act, the borrower is not liable to pay any amount in respect of the principal and interest of a loan which, together with any amount already paid, exceeds twice the principal of the original loan. He is also not bound to pay simple interest exceeding 10 per cent on unsecured loans and 8 per cent on secured ones. There were 37 licensed money-lenders in the district in 1968.[2]

Joint stock banks

There are several branches of well-known joint-stock banks in the municipal and non-municipal towns of the district which play an important role in mobilizing the savings of the people. The State Bank of India has branches at Suri and Rampurhat opened on 4 June 1956 and 30 October 1958 respectively, pay offices at Sainthia, Ahmadpur, Bolpur and Santiniketan opened respectively on 15 September 1941, 13 October 1969, 3 March 1952 and 21 December 1968 and sub-offices at Murarai, Mollar-

[1] ibid., table 5.6, p. 118.
[2] Source, District Magistrate, Birbhum, Suri.

pur and Dubrajpur opened respectively on 13 April 1970, 14 April 1970 and 20 April 1970.[1] The United Bank of India has branches at Bolpur, Suri, Rampurhat, Ahmadpur and Sainthia opened respectively on 27 January 1948, 23 July 1948, 27 December 1968, 24 December 1969 and 30 December 1969.[2] Its deposits during 1968 were Rs. 98.66 lakhs while advances during the same year amounted to Rs. 2.61 lakhs.[3] The United Commercial Bank has branches one each at Dubrajpur and Kirnahar opened on 20 September 1968 and 16 June 1969 respectively.[4] The Allahabad Bank has one branch at Nalhati opened on 5 March 1969.[5]

Co-operative banks and credit societies

There had been four central co-operative banks in the district, namely, Rampurhat Central Co-operative Bank Ltd., Birbhum Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. at Suri, Visva-Bharati Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. and Nalhati Central Co-operative Bank Ltd., of which the first two started functioning on 23 April 1910 and 2 January 1917 respectively and the last two on 22 November 1927. The Visva-Bharati Central Co-operative Bank merged with its counterpart at Suri on 22 August 1958 and the other two, namely, the Rampurhat Central Co-operative Bank and the Nalhati Central Co-operative Bank amalgamated with the former on 29 December 1962 and the amalgamated Central Bank was re-named as Birbhum District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. The position of the bank during the years 1967-68, 1968-69 and 1969-70 was as below[6]:

	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70
No. of members	1,169	1,178	1,183
	(in thousands of rupees)		
Share capital (paid up)	1,253	1,292	1,410
Reserve fund	209	211	250
Deposits	2,727	2,616	2,403
Working Capital	10,508	8,465	13,513
Loans issued	7,878	5,660	8,352
Profit	90	143	301

[1] Source: Joint Chief Officer, Reserve Bank of India, Department of Banking Operations and Development, Calcutta.
[2,3] Source: Economist, Department of Economic Studies, United Bank of India, Calcutta.
[4,5] Source: Joint Chief Officer, Reserve Bank of India, Department of Banking Operations and Development, Calcutta.
[6] Source: Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Birbhum, Suri.

The Birbhum Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank Ltd. started functioning on and from 5 November 1934. Its position during 1969-70 was as follows: membership 1,318; share capital (paid up) Rs. 1,01,975; statutory reserve Rs. 11,808; working capital Rs. 16,30,000; loans issued Rs. 5,45,933; loans outstanding Rs. 13,75,248; profit Rs. 6,000.[1]

During 1969-70, agricultural co-operative societies in the district numbered 893 with a total membership of 67,778, their financial position being as follows: working capital Rs. 12,50,00,850; deposits Rs. 1,70,116; loans issued Rs. 79,46,622; loans outstanding Rs. 1,02,55,058, profit Rs. 1,33,129; and loss 1,09,067.[2]

Life Insurance and National Savings Schemes

The Life Insurance Corporation of India has a branch at Suri and a development centre at Bolpur, the entire disctrict is under the operational jurisdiction of the former. During 1964-65 it had a total business of Rs. 112.28 lakhs for 2,873 policies, the corresponding figures being Rs. 118.82 lakhs for 3,019 policies in 1965-66, Rs. 121.97 lakhs for 3,094 policies in 1966-67, Rs. 154.77 lakhs for 3,327 policies in 1967-68 and Rs. 143.67 lakhs for 2,953 policies in 1968-69. Besides, these two units also transact all types of general insurance businesses.[3] In the field of national savings (including Post Office Savings Accounts and Cumulative Time Deposits) the gross and net figures of collection during 1968-69 were Rs. 2,48,17,000 and Rs. 6,23,000 respectively.[4]

State assistance to industrial development

The financial assistance rendered by the State Government to cottage and small-scale industries of different categories under the Bengal State Aid to Industries Act has been discussed in Chapter IV. Besides, the Industrial Finance Corporation of India, created under the Union act bearing the same name in 1948, advanced loans amounting to Rs. 35 lakhs to Mayurakshi Cotton Mills Ltd. during 1965-66.[5]

TRADE AND COMMERCE

The main agricultural produce of the district is rice in which it is not only self-sufficient but also exports a considerable proportion of its marketable surplus which, according to an investigation made by the Marketing Branch of the Agriculture Directorate in 1960, consists of about 34 per cent of the total production. In the sphere of marketing the traditional system

[1,2] Source: Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Birbhum, Suri.
[3] Source: Divisional Manager, L.I.C.I., Calcutta.
[4] Source: Regional Director of National Savings, West Bengal.
[5] Source: General Manager, Industrial Finance Corporation of India, New Delhi.

in which direct dealings between the producers and ultimate consumers take place at a central place, called market, still persists in this district also. The system of barter in which the major crop serves as a medium of exchange likewise persists in the villages. Paddy loans are repaid in terms of paddy. Side by side with these phenomena, gradual development of economic activities has brought in its train modern system of marketing with its usual complexities and problems. The growers' price is in most cases determined and dictated by middlemen who are financed by and act as agents of wholesalers or millers and consequently they look more to the interest of the latter at the cost of the growers. The system of open auction is still not in vogue. Paddy normally comes to the mills through two channels, namely, the big growers and the set of middlemen like *fariahs*, village merchants, *beparis* and *aratdars*. The growers themselves assemble about 30 per cent of the produce while the middlemen bring in 60 per cent to the mills. Another agency known as commission agent is responsible for assembling the remaining 10 per cent of the marketable surplus to the mills. These agents are also financed by the mills and in certain cases utilise their own capital for investment. Some co-operative societies also work as commission agents of the mills. Distribution effected solely in the shape of rice is done through the agencies like brokers, wholesalers and retailers.

The brokers formerly played a very important role in export trade of this commodity outside the district by securing orders on behalf of the private exporters, but this trade is now exclusively handled by the Food Corporation of India. In the field of export trade there was previously a market practice known as *bilticut* under which a consignment was sent to any outside market for delivery to the consignor whose agent at that particular place endorsed the railway receipt in favour of the purchaser on receipt of the sale price including the incidental costs.

There are certain charges known as market charges which are recognised by custom and realised by the purchasers at the time of sale of the commodity put in the market by growers or *beparis*; sometimes these charges are partially payable by the purchasers as well. Unscrupulous merchants taking advantage of the ignorance of the growers deduce exorbitant charges from the sale proceeds, depriving the latter of their legitimate share. *Dhalta* is charged on the sellers at the rate of 2 seers per maund of paddy in all transactions up to the stage of mills to cover

loss on account of driage and admixture of foreign materials like dust, stone and other particles, etc. *Iswarbritti* is another charge levied on the sellers (growers or *beparis*) by the buyers (wholesale stockists or mills) at the rate of 16 paise per transaction of every Rs. 100 as contribution towards a charitable fund. *Koyali*, a weighment charge, is levied at 6 paise per bag of 2½ maunds, payable of sellers at all stages of assembling. Hat charges at the rate of 25 paise per head-load of paddy, 50 paise per cart-load of 8-10 maunds and Rs. 2/- per lorry-load of 150 maunds are levied on all transactions at any market place. Such charges are not levied on stocks assembled at mill premises. Besides, there are other charges like the commission of the *aratdars* for the services rendered by them as also the brokerage of the brokers.

Potato is another important crop grown in this district which also imports a sizeable quantity of the same, about 20 thousand quintals, between August and October. Middlemen's roll in the trade of this commodity is not very significant, only 25 per cent of the annual turnover being handled by them. The bulk, that is, 75 per cent is sold by the growers themselves, mostly to the stockists or wholesalers at the assembling markets. Sometimes, the growers themselves operate as middlemen through the system known as *aratdari* in which they maintain godowns at the assembling or wholesale markets and hold the stock on behalf of the growers or other *beparis* for sale in exchange of commission In transactions of potato also certain market charges are levied which are as follows. *Iswarbritti* at the rate of 25 paise for transaction of every Rs. 100 is realised by the *aratdars*. Weighment charges are realised at the rate of 6 paise per bag of 1 maund and 10 seers from the sellers at all stages. Hat charges are levied at the rate of 25 paise for small lots, 75 paise per cart-load and Rs. 2.50 per lorry-load of the commodity on all sellers who assemble their stock in the market.

Imports & Exports

The main items of agricultural produce imported into the district are wheat, mustard seeds, pulses and ginger, while rice comprises the main exported commodity. Import of rice and export of paddy occur only during an emergency and that too on Government account. Wheat is likewise imported at Government level. The district produces about 40 thousand quintals of mustard-oil extracted from one lakh quintal of mustard seeds imported from Bihar, U.P. and Punjab, of which 80 per cent is consumed internally and the remaining 20 per cent is exported

to Burdwan and Murshidabad. The following two tables give relevant statistics about the main items of import and export during the years 1965-66, 1966-67 and 1967-68 which will show that the district is all along left with favourable balance of trade.

TABLE 1

IMPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE INTO BIRBHUM DISTRICT

Commodities	*Year*	*Volume (in lakhs of quintals)*	*Value in lakhs of rupees)*	*Source*
Rice	1965-66	0.05	3.39	
	1966-67	0.08	8.14	
	1967-68	Nil	Nil	
Wheat	1965-66	0.39	21.56	Bihar, U.P.,
	1966-67	0.79	48.98	Punjab &
	1967-68	0.95	75.60	Rajasthan
Mustard-seed	1965-66	0.90	112.50	Bihar, U.P.
	1966-67	0.95	123.50	
	1967-68	1.00	128.00	
Pulses	1965-66	0.80	72.00	Bihar, U.P.,
	1966-67	0.70	60.00	Punjab
	1967-68	0.65	55.00	
Ginger	1965-66	0.015	2.00	
	1966-67	0.016	2.20	
	1967-68	0.016	2.25	
Total	1965-66	2.155	211.45	
	1966-67	2.536	242.82	
	1967-68	2.616	260.85	

TABLE 2

EXPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE FROM BIRBHUM DISTRICT

Commodities	*Year*	*Volume (in lakhs of quintals)*	*Value (in lakhs of rupees)*	*Source*
Paddy	1965-66	0.30	15.17	Nadia, Murshidabad, 24-Parganas
	1966-67	0.07	4.11	"
	1967-68	0.15	18.16	"
Rice	1965-66	10.07	704.71	"
	1966-67	5.66	566.11	"
	1967-68	5.80	869.40	"
Total	1965-66	10.37	719.88	
	1966-67	5.73	570.22	
	1967-68	5.95	887.56	

Besides, the district exports some quantity of handloom products, cotton textiles, firebricks and potteries and imports coal and miscellaneous industrial products, chiefly consumer goods, from various places outside the district. No authoritative information about the volume and value of these articles of export and import is available.

Regulated market

Regulated markets are restricted chiefly to procurement and distribution of paddy, rice and wheat and are looked after by the staff of the Food Corporation of India and of the Food and Supplies Department.

Centres of wholesale & retail business

A comprehensive list of wholesale and retail marketing centres of the district dealing chiefly in paddy, rice, potato and vegetables has been given in Appendix—C at the end of this Chapter.

Fairs and melas

The fairs and *melas* held chiefly on religious occasions are of great economic importance for marketing of agricultural produce in rural areas where they are primarily concentrated. A comprehensive list of fairs and *melas* held in the district round the year showing their location, time, occasion, duration and approximate total attendance, as far as available, is given in Appendix—D to this Chapter.

Source: District Agricultural Marketing Officer, Birbhum and Superintendent of Agricultural Marketing, Western Range, Burdwan.

Co-operative Marketing

There are 14 large-sized primary co-operative agricultural marketing societies in the district. Their position as on 30 June 1969 is indicated in the table below.[1]

CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING SOCIETIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1969

Name of Marketing Societies	No. of members	Total share capital (paid up) Rs.	Working capital includ-ing Govt. contribu-tion Rs.	Value of sales Rs.	Profit (+) loss (−) Rs.
Dubrajpur Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd.	317	16,970	40,387	2,36,304	(−) 1,369
Ilambazar Thana Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd	263	25,080	36,080	1,87,167	(+) 9,247
Balipur Krishija Bipanan Samabaya Samity Ltd.	133	20,820	37,112	3,89,423	(+) 5,143
Nanur thana Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd.	226	31,085	49,686	1,55,058	(−) 2,579
Mathpalsa Co-op. Multipurpose Society Ltd.	161	61,605	73,457	1,99,264	(−) 3,340
Ahmadpur Jana-Kalyan Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd.	90	25,490	51,892	4,11,481	(+) 2,884
Mahammad Bazar Central Co-op. Marketing Society Ltd.	104	31,850	45,704	5,74,155	(+) 2,237
Labhpur thana Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd.	174	25,110	48,373	1,94,238	(−) 5,066
Murarai thana Large-sized Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd.	921	1,02,617	1,95,904	6,52,813	(−) 6,791
Makarpur Co-op. Large-sized Marketing Society Ltd.	214	13,250	27,889	3,50,516	(−) 8,218

[1] Source: Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Birbhum.

CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING SOCIETIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1969 — (*Contd.*)

Name of Marketing Societies	No. of members	Total share capital (paid up) Rs	Working capital including Govt. contribution Rs.	Value of sales Rs.	Profit (+) loss (–) Rs.
Rampurhat Large-sized Agril. Co-op. Marketing Society Ltd.	104	23,613	69,042	2,99,665	(–) 615
Nalhati thana Co-op. Marketing Society Ltd.	1,139	65,790	1,39,297	6,18,923	(–) 15,015
Suri thana Co-op. Agril Marketing Society Ltd.	286	3,55,930	4,70,886	20,11,520	(+) 15,821
Rajnagar thana Co-op. Agril. Marketing Society Ltd.	221	3,310	14,172	8,604	(–) 1,700
Total	4,413	8,02,720	13,00,211	62,89,131	(+) 35,612 (–) 44,693

Besides, the Birbhum Wholesale Consumers' Co-operative Society Ltd., established in 1966 and the only one of its kind in the district, deserves mention. On 30 June 1969, its membership was 1,018; total share capital (paid up) 1,43,500; share capital paid up by the Government Rs. 1,12,000 ; working capital (including Government contribution) Rs. 3,88,211 ; value of sales Rs. 9,39,015 and loss Rs. 24,850.[1]

Procurement and distribution

The Food Corporation of India is now in exclusive charge of procurement and distribution of paddy, rice, wheat, etc. in the district. During 1969, it procured rice weighing 74,674 metric tonnes, valued at Rs. 7,99,01,180 and paddy weighing 24,117 metric tonnes valued at Rs. 1,57,99,560. Its purchase rate per quintal of different categories of rice and paddy is as follows: *aman* fine rice Rs. 98.40, superfine rice Rs. 107.10, common rice Rs. 92.90, *aman* fine paddy Rs. 59, superfine paddy Rs. 62 and common paddy Rs. 56, the corresponding issue rate per quintal of different categories of rice to the distributor being Rs. 124.70 for *aman* fine rice, Rs. 134.70 for superfine rice and Rs. 116.70 for common rice.[2]

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[1] Source: Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Birbhum, Suri.
[2] Source: Manager, Food Corporation of India, Suri.

Industries in the district, though very few in number, are affiliated to some chambers of commerce or others which have their headquarters in Calcutta.

Organs for dissemination of trade news

Dissemination of trade news, etc. is mainly done by the commercial journals as also by the Agricultural Marketing Directorate of the State Government. The Calcutta station of the All India Radio also broadcasts market news regularly.

Weights and measures

Prior to the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures in the district with effect from 1 April 1962, the standard weights and measures, as indicated below[1], operated side by side, with local systems, vestiges of which are still to be found persisting in various parts of the district.

Weights	—	maund (40 seers), seer (80 and 60 tolas), *poa, chhatak.*
Liquid measure (English)	—	Gallon, quart, pint, gill.
Linear measure	—	mile, yard, foot, inch.
Land measure	—	*bigha, katha, chhatak.*
Cloth measure	—	*Gaj, hath, gira, anguli.*

Local weights and measures which were and still are in vogue are as follows. In Suri sub-division, *kachha* seer equivalent to $54\frac{10}{16}$ tolas were used for weighing all kinds of goods, *batkari* of 58, 60, 70 and 80 tolas were in use in Suri, Bolpur, Ilambazar and Sakulipur respectively for weighing rice, jaggery, oil-cakes, etc., *pai* of 110 tolas was in use for measuring rice and pulses in Rajnagar area. In Rampurhat sub-division, *kachha* seer and *tul* equivalent to $58\frac{10}{16}$ tolas were in general use. Besides, measures of capacity like seer (equivalent to 1 quart or $58\frac{10}{16}$ tolas) and *pai* ($29\frac{5}{8}$ tolas) were used for measuring rice, oil-seeds, milk and *ghi*. Bamboo *chunga* (equivalent to 70 tolas in Suri and 73 tolas in Rampurhat) and *ari* (equivalent to 10 seers in Suri and $7\frac{1}{2}$ seers in Rampurhat) were also in use.[2]

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[1] Source: Assistant Controller of Weights and Measures, Birbhum, Suri.
[2] L.S.S.O'Malley -- Bengal District Gazetteers, Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910. p. 178.

APPENDIX A

Extent and incidence of indebtedness by Occupational Groups of Households in Sahajapur Village in Birbhum District during the period 1956–61

Occupational Group	OLD DEBTS					CURRENT DEBTS				TOTAL DEBTS	
	No. & % of households in debt		Amount of loan	Amount per household		No. & % of households in debt		Amount per household		Amount per household	
	No.	%	cash (Rs.)	cash (Rs.)	kind (in mds.)	No.	%	cash (Rs.)	kind (in mds.)	cash (Rs.)	kind (in mds.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
(1) 1956											
1	5	21.7	855	37.17	—	17	73.9	113.39	2.91	150.56	2.91
2	9	32.1	477	17.04	1.02	12	42.9	12.93	5.32	29.97	6.34
3	10	28.6	420	12.00	0.14	5	14.3	8.17	0.63	20.17	0.77
4	1	8.3	144	12.00	—	4	33.3	25.58	0.13	37.58	0.13
5	3	16.7	260	14.44	—	1	5.6	2.33	—	16.77	—
6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	3	27.3	63	5.73	—	1	9.1	9.55	—	15.28	—
Total	31	24.2	2219	17.34	0.26	40	31.3	28.98	1.87	46.32	2.13
(2) 1961											
1	3	12.5	660	27.50	—	10	41.7	80.42	1.33	107.92	1.33
2	9	52.9	345	20.29	0.59	12	70.6	33.53	7.47	53.82	8.06
3	4	7.8	395	7.75	—	32	62.7	19.02	1.41	26.77	1.41
4	—	—	—	—	—	2	13.3	16.00	0.67	16.00	0.67
5	3	25.0	200	16.67	—	4	33.3	13.50	—	30.17	—
6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	2	22.2	300	33.33	—	4	22.5	23.89	1.11	57.22	1.11
Total	21	15.9	1900	14.39	0.08	64	48.5	30.96	1.90	45.35	1.98

APPENDIX B

Debts (Cash) by source in Sahajapur Village in Birbhum District during 1956-61

*Occupational Groups	OLD DEBTS Governments	Co-operative credit society	Grocer & Merchants	Others**	Total	CURRENT DEBTS Governments	Co-operative credit society	Grocer & Merchants	Others**	Total	TOTAL DEBTS Government	Co-operative credit society	Grocer & Merchants	Others**	Total
1956															
1	205 (24.0)	—	320 (37.4)	330 (38.6)	855 (100.0)	80 (3.1)	—	828 (31.7)	1700 (65.2)	2608 (100.0)	285 (8.2)	—	1148 (33.2)	2030 (58.6)	3463 (100.0)
2	45 (9.4)	—	71 (14.9)	361 (75.7)	477 (100.0)	—	—	43 (11.9)	319 (88.1)	362 (100.0)	45 (5.4)	—	114 (13.6)	680 (81.0)	839 (100.0)
3	117 (27.9)	—	25 (5.9)	278 (66.2)	420 (100.0)	—	—	[illegible]	220 (76.9)	286 (100.0)	117 (16.6)	—	91 (12.9)	498 (70.5)	706 (100.0)
4	—	—	144 (100.0)	—	144 (100.0)	—	—	62 (20.2)	245 (79.8)	307 (100.0)	—	—	206 (45.7)	245 (54.3)	451 (100.0)
Non-Agr. Class	—	—	78 (24.1)	245 (75.9)	323 (100.0)	—	—	—	147 (100.0)	147 (100.0)	—	—	78 (16.6)	392 (83.4)	470 (100.0)
Total	367 (16.5)	—	658 (29.7)	1194 (53.8)	2219 (100.0)	80 (2.2)	—	999 (26.9)	2631 (70.9)	3710 (100.0)	447 (7.6)	—	1657 (27.9)	3825 (64.5)	5929 (100.0)
1961															
1	60 (9.9)	—	—	600 (90.1)	660 (100.0)	1220 (63.2)	500 (25.9)	—	210 (10.9)	1930 (100.0)	1280 (49.4)	500 (19.3)	—	810 (31.3)	2590 (100.0)

APPENDIX B—*Contd.*

Debts (Cash) by source in Sahajapur Village in Birbhum District during 1961

*Occupational Groups	OLD DEBTS: Governments	OLD DEBTS: Co-operative credit society	OLD DEBTS: Grocer & Merchants	OLD DEBTS: Others**	OLD DEBTS: Total	CURRENT DEBTS: Governments	CURRENT DEBTS: Co-operative credit society	CURRENT DEBTS: Grocer & Merchants	CURRENT DEBTS: Others**	CURRENT DEBTS: Total	TOTAL DEBTS: Governments	TOTAL DEBTS: Co-operative credit society	TOTAL DEBTS: Grocer & Merchants	TOTAL DEBTS: Others**	TOTAL DEBTS: Total
2	20 (5.8)	—	55 (15.9)	270 (78.3)	345 (100.0)	230 (40.4)	200 (35.1)	—	140 (24.5)	570 (100.0)	250 (27.3)	200 (21.9)	55 (6.0)	410 (44.8)	915 (100.0)
3	—	—	35 (8.9)	360 (91.1)	395 (100.0)	—	—	50 (5.2)	920 (94.8)	970 (100.0)	—	—	85 (6.2)	1280 (93.8)	1365 (100.0)
4	—	—	—	—	—	90 (37.5)	150 (62.5)	—	—	240 (100.0)	90 (37.5)	150 (62.5)	—	—	240 (100.0)
5	—	—	30 (15.0)	170 (85.0)	200 (100.0)	—	—	—	162 (100.0)	162 (100.0)	—	—	30 (8.3)	332 (91.7)	362 (100.0)
6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	200 (66.7)	—	100 (33.3)	—	300 (100.0)	50 (23.3)	—	100 (46.5)	65 (30.2)	215 (100.0)	250 (48.6)	—	200 (38.8)	65 (12.6)	515 (100.0)
Non-Agr. Class	200 (40.0)	—	130 (26.0)	170 (34.0)	500 (100.0)	50 (13.3)	—	100 (26.5)	227 (60.2)	377 (100.0)	250 (28.5)	—	230 (26.2)	397 (45.3)	877 (100.0)
Total	280 (14.7)	—	220 (11.6)	1400 (73.7)	1900 (100.0)	1590 (38.9)	850 (20.8)	150 (3.7)	1497 (36.6)	4087 (100.0)	1870 (31.2)	850 (14.2)	270 (6.2)	2897 (48.4)	5987 (100.0)

*1. Cultivators of land wholly/mainly owned. 2. Cultivators of land wholly/mainly unowned. 3. Agricultural labour. 4. Agricultural) rent-receiver. 5. Production other than cultivation. 6. Trade & Commerce 8. Service, Profession & Miscellaneous.

**Others:—Cultivators, relatives, widows, etc.

N.B. Figures within brackets indicate percentage.

APPENDIX C

List of Markets in Birbhum District

Name of market	Year of origin	Days of sitting	Principal agricultural commodities handled	Mainly wholesale or retail	Daily average attendance
BOLPUR P.S.					
Bolpur Hat	1902	Sundays & Thursdays	Vegetables	Retail	5,000
Bahiri Hat		Mondays & Fridays	Paddy, rice, vegetables	,,	500
Singi Hat		Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	500
DUBRAJPUR P.S.					
Chinpai Hat	—	Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	500
Dubrajpur Hat	1802	Mondays & Fridays	,,	Wholesale-cum-retail	2,000
Hetampur Hat	Above 40 years	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	Retail	500
Kantori Hat		Sundays	,,	,,	500
Sahapur Hat		Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	250
ILAMBAZAR P.S.					
Ilambazar	Above 30 years	Daily	,,	,,	200
Ilambazar Hat	Above 60 years	Sundays & Wednesdays	,,	,,	1,500
KHAYRASOL P.S.					
Babuijor Hat	Above 60 years	Mondays & Fridays	,,	,,	250
Barra Hat	,,	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	250
Hazratpur Hat	,,	Sundays & Wednesdays	,,	,,	250
Lokpur Hat	,,	Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	250
Panchra Hat	,,	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	250

Name of market	Year of origin	Days of sitting	Principal agricultural commodities handled	Mainly wholesale or retail	Daily average attendance
LABHPUR P.S.					
Aradanga Hat	1941	Wednesdays & Saturdays	Paddy, rice, potato, brinjal and other vegetables	,,	250
Chanhata Hat	Above 20 years	Sundays & Wednesdays	Paddy, rice, potato, brinjal and other vegetables	Retail	250
Daurka Hat	Above 50 years	Mondays & Fridays	,,	,,	250
Kirnahar Hat	1938	Sundays & Wednesdays	,,	,,	250
Laghosa Hat	Above 15 years	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	250
Tarulia Hat	Above 50 years	,,	,,	,,	250
Labhpur Hat	,,	Mondays & Fridays	,,	,,	600
Labhpur Market	,,	Daily	,,	,,	250
MAYURESWAR P.S.					
Motherpur Hat	1825	Wednesdays & Saturdays	Vegetables, potato, *gur*	Wholesale & retail	2,000
Dakshingram Hat	1947	Thursdays & Fridays	Seasonal vegetables	Retail	200
Kaleswar Hat	1949	Sundays & Wednesdays	,,	,,	250
Mahisha Hat	1954	Tuesdays & Fridays	,,	,,	200
Ramnagar Hat	1832	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	350
Ratanpur Hat	1954	Mondays & Fridays	,,	,,	300
Mayureswar Hat	1825	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	300
Satpalsa Hat	1880	Tuesdays & Saturdays	Potato and other vegetables	Wholesale	900

Name of market	Year of origin	Days of sitting	Principal agricultural commodities handled	Mainly wholesale or retail	Daily average attendance
MAHAMMAD BAZAR P.S.					
Deucha Hat	1950	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	200
Mahammad Bazar Hat	Above 50 years	Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	500
Makdumnagar Hat	,,	Sundays & Wednesdays	,,	,,	250
Sarenda Hat	Above 10 years	Wednesdays	Potato and other vegetables	Wholesale	250
MURARAI P.S.					
Jajigram Hat	1897	Wednesdays & Saturdays	Seasonal vegetables	Retail	300
Paikar Hat	1832	Sundays & Tuesdays	Rice, seasonal vegetables	,,	900
Rajgram Hat	1807	Tuesdays & Saturdays	Seasonal vegetables and cattle	,,	800
Murarai Hat	1832	,,	Seasonal vegetables & fish	,,	400
Murarai Hat (New)	1832	Sundays & Thursdays	Seasonal vegetables	,,	300
Ratanpur Hat	1954	Mondays & Fridays	,,	,,	300
Chatra Hat	1862	Wednesdays	Vegetables, cattle, poultry & timber	Wholesale & retail	2,000
NALHATI P.S.					
Bhadrapur Hat	1807	Wednesdays & Saturdays	Seasonal vegetables	Wholesale & retail	350
Kaytha Hat	1897	Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	500
Kurumgram Hat	1897	,,	,,	,,	300
Lohapur Hat	1857	Mondays & Thursdays	Seasonal vegetables, rice	,,	500
Nalhati Market	1936	Daily	,,	,,	500

Name of market	Year of origin	Days of sitting	Principal agricultural commodities handled	Mainly wholesale or retail	Daily average attendance
Tejhati Hat	1897	Sundays & Wednesdays	Seasonal vegetables	..	250
Nalhati Hat (New)	1948	,,	,,	Wholesale-cum-retail	700
Nalhati Hat (Old)	1850	All days except Sundays and Wednesdays	Rice, pulses, vegetables, *gur*, onion, mango	..	1,200
NANUR P.S.					
Khujutipara Hat	Above 50 years	Sundays & Wednesdays	Paddy, rice, potato, brinjal and other vegetables	Wholesale-cum-retail	250
Kirnahar Hat	..	Daily	..	,,	500
RAJNAGAR P.S.					
Barabani Hat	Above 50 years	Tuesdays & Saturdays	Paddy, rice, potato, brinjal and other vegetables	Wholesale-cum-retail	300
Rajnagar Bazar	..	Daily	,,	,,	200
Rajnagar Hat	Above 40 years	Sundays & Thursdays	,,	,,	1,500
Tantipara Hat	Above 50 years	Wednesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	700
RAMPURHAT P.S.					
Baidpara Hat	1950	Mondays & Thursdays	Seasonal vegetables	,	300
Baha Palsa Hat	1897	Mondays & Fridays	,,	,,	300
Belebera Hat	1907	Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	300
Bishnupur Hat	1790	Sundays & Thursdays	Seasonal vegetables and rice	,,	600
Chandpara Hat	1951	Tuesdays & Saturdays	Seasonal vegetables	,,	200
Margram Market	1877	Daily	,,	,,	400

Name of market	Year of origin	Days of sitting	Principal agricultural commodities handled	Mainly wholesale or retail	Daily average attendance
Nandigram Hat	1897	Wednesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	250
Narayanpur Hat	1882	Sundays & Wednesdays	,,	,,	500
Taraper Hat	1907	Tuesdays & Saturdays	,,	,,	200
Rampurhat Hat	1873	Mondays & Fridays	Potato, other vegetables	,,	1,200
Rampurhat Cattle Hat	1892	Thursdays	Cattle	,,	400
SAINTHIA P.S.					
Ahmadpur Hat	1879	Sundays & Wednesdays	Summer & winter vegetables, potato, onion etc.	Wholesale-cum-retail	4,000
Ahmadpur Market	Above 50 years	Daily	Paddy, rice, mustard, cane, pulses (whole and split) mustard oil, *gur* and straw	Whol-sale	2,000
Sainthia Hat	1947	Mondays & Fridays	Vegetables	Wholesale-cum-retail	2,400
Sainthia Hat	Above 25 years	Fridays & Tuesdays	Paddy, rice, vegetables	Retail	300
Sainthia Market	1888	Daily	Paddy, rice, pulses, oil, oilcakes, *gur*, spices, wheat	Wholesale	300
Sainthia Garnur Hat	Above 50 years	Saturdays	Cattle	,,	300
SURI P.S.					
Suri Market	1818	Daily	Vegetables, fish, meat, paddy	Retail	2,000
Karidhya Hat	Above 100 years	Sundays & Thursdays	Paddy, rice, vegetables	,,	800
Purandarpur Hat	,,	,,	,,	,,	500

APPENDIX D

List of Fairs and Melas in Birbhum District

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
BOLPUR P.S.					
Bahiri	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Maghi Purnima	5	3,000
Bolpur Town	Feb.-March	Falgun	Agricultural & Industrial Fair	4	500
Dwarakanathpur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Goshthashtami	1	200
Ganara	May-June	Jyaistha		2	300
Goalpara	March-April	Chaitra	Kankalimata Puja	2	4,000
Goalpara	March-April	Chaitra Purnima	Dharmaraj Puja	2	2,000
Kasba	January	1st Magh	Brahmadaitya Puja	1	100
Laldaha	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Saraswati Puja	4	1,000
Laldaha	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	3	500
Mahadebpur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Gopal Puja	3	3,000
Manoharpur	January	1st Magh	Brahmachari Puja	2	600
Muluk	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Goshthashtami	3	450
Munitala	January	Poush	Poush Samkranti	4	1,000
Nahina	April-May	Baisakh Purnima	Dharmaraj Puja	3	1,500
Purushottampur	Dec.-Jan.	Poush	Poush Samkranti	3	1,000
Raipur	May-June	Jyaistha	—	3	300
Salan	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Sree Panchami	—	800
Santiniketan	December	Poush	Poush Mela	4	15,000
Sian	December	Poush	Rishya Sringa Muni	3	1,000
Simulia	Feb.-March	Falgun	—	3	3,000
Singi	—	—	Agrl. and Industrial Fair	3	4,000
Sriniketan	February	Magh	Magh mela	3	5,000

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Srichandrapur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Dol Purnima	4	2,000
Supur	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	300
Supur	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Ras Purnima	3	500
Suratheswar Tala	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	3	300
DUBRAJPUR P.S.					
Bakreswar	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	8	15,000
Bandhrsal	—	—	Dharmaraj Puja	2	100
Belahari	January	Poush	Poush Samkranti	3	300
Berori	May-June	Jyaistha	Manasa Puja	1	2,000
Chandidaspur	March-April	Chaitra	Ramnavami	4	4,000
Hetampur	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Saraswati Puja	4	3,000
Chandipur	April-May	Baisakh	Baisakhi Purnima	1	500
Hetampur	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	3,000
Hetampur	July-August	Sravan	Jhulanjatra	3	500
Islampur	April	Chaitra	Chaitra Samkranti	1	500
Islampur	March-April	Chaitra-Baisakh	Fakir Saheb's mela	3	500
Jamthalia	April-May	Baisakh Purnima	Dharmaraj Puja	1	800
Jatra	January	Poush	Poush Samkranti	3	250
Kaddang	April-May-June	Baisakh-Jyaistha	Dharmaraj Puja	6	1,000
Kalyanpur	April-May	Baisakh Purnima	Dharmaraj Puja	3	5,000
Kendula	May-June	Jyaistha	Dharmaraj Puja	1	500
Khageswar	April	Chaitra	Charak Puja	2	500
Keta	April-May	Baisakh Purnima	Dharma Puja	1	1,000
Kuita	—	—	Muharram	1	1,000
Loba	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	500
Loba	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Kali Puja	3	4,000

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Metela	April-May	Baisakh	Dharmaraj Puja	1	12,000
Sahapur	March-April-May	Chaitra-Baisakh	—	7	1,000
Uttardaha	May-June	Jyaistha	Dharmaraj Puja	1	300
ILAMBAZAR P.S.					
Gaetia	April-May-June	Baisakh-Jyaistha	Religious Festival	5	500
Gangapur	May-June	Jyaistha	Dharmaraj Puja	3	250
Gangapur	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Manasa Puja	1	1,000
Gopalnagar	June-July	Ashad	Ashadi Purnima	1	500
Garisa	May-June-July	Jyaistha-Ashad	—	1	500
Ilambazar	April-May-June	Baisakh-Jyaistha	Mahotsav	4	5,000
Jaydeb Kenduli	January	Poush	Poush Samkranti	3	50,000
Katna	Dec.-Jan.-Feb	Poush-Magh	—	2	500
Mangaldihi	Oct -Nov.	Kartik-Agrahayan	Raspurnima	3	500
Purba Narayanpur	—	—	Dharmaraj Puja	3	250
KHAYRASOL P.S.					
Babuijor	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Saraswati Puja	2	400
Bagasal	January	1st Magh	Saraswati Puja	1	1,500
Barra	Jan.-Feb.-March	Magh-Falgun	Ganes Janani Puja	3	500
Bhabanigunj	Jan.-Feb.-March	Magh-Falgun	Chandi Puja	2	800
Bhadulia	April-May-June	Baisakh-Jyaistha	Dharma Puja	2	300
Churar	Oct.-Nov.-Dec.	Kartik-Agrahayan	Raspurnima	3	400
Gernapahari	Aug.-Sept.-Oct.	Bhadra-Aswin	Santali Mela	1	350
Isgara	April-May-June	Baisakh-Jyaistha	Kali Puja	3	600

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Jamalpur	April-May-June	Baisakh-Jyaistha	Manasa Puja	3	1,200
Khayrasol	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Goshthashtami	1	700
Krishnapur	Jan.-Feb.-March	Magh-Falgun	Chandi Puja	1	500
Lower Kha	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	—	7	2,000
Nakrakonda	March-April	Chaitra	Dol Purnima	2	400
Nundira	Jan.-Feb.-March	Magh-Falgun	Gosain Puja	1	500
Rasa	March-April	Chaitra	Siva Puja	1	400
LABHPUR P.S.					
Daurka	April	Chaitra	Charak Puja	7	4,000
Dhandanga	March-April-May	Chaitra-Baisakh	—	2-4	400
Labhpur	Jan.-Feb.	Magh Purnima	Fullara Debi Puja	10	3,000
Mahespur	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Kali Puja	10	5,000
Phalagram	April-May	Baisakh-Purnima	Dharmaraj Puja	1	800
Purba Mahula	—	—	Sannyasi Gosain's Mela	15	2,000
Rakhareswar	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	10	2,500
MAYURESWAR P.S.					
Aradhanamela	Feb.-March	Falgun	—	3	3,000
Birchandrapur	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Goshthashtami	7	—
Dangal Muraldi	January	Poush	Poush Samkranti	3	500
Dheka	Jan.-Feb	Magh	Religious festival	1	800
Fakirkhanamela	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	—	7	2,000
Fatehpur		Every Saturday	Kali Puja	1	400
Jhikadda	April	Chaitra	Chaitra Samkranti	1	600
Kaleswar	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	30	—

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Kamra	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	—	4	3,000
Kotasur	April-May	Baisakh	—	7	4,000
Kundala	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	1,500
Mallarpur	April	Chaitra	Chaitra Samkranti	5	1,000
MAHAMMAD BAZAR P.S.					
Alinagar	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Chandpir	1	4,000
Baliharpur	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Bijaya Dasami	1	2,000
Danjora	July-Aug.-Sept.	Sravan-Bhadra	Danjora Mela	1	700
Danjora	July-Aug.-Sept.	Sravan-Bhadra	Raghunath Mela	1	300
Dencha	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	500
Dighalgram	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	250
Dighalgram	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Brahmadaitya Puja	1	1,000
Dwarkota	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Goshthashtami	3	2,000
Ganpur	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	1,000
Haridaspur	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Kalipuja	1	200
Harinsinga	April	1st Baisakh	Charak Puja	1	150
Hingla	April	Chaitra	Charak Puja	1	1,500
Jindharpur	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	500
Makdumnagar	—	—	Muharram	2	500
Maulpur	March-April	Chaitra	Charak Puja	7	6,000
Raghunathpur	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	400
Raypur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	4	1,000
Raypur	April	Chaitra	Charak Puja	1	500
Sanganpur	April-May	Baisakh	Dharmaraj Puja	1	1,500
Uska	March-April	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	1	200
MURARAI P.S.					
Ambhna	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Kartik Puja	2	500
Bahadurpur	March-April	Chaitra	Basanti Puja	5	5,000

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Bhadiswar	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	2	1,000
Dalima	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Saraswati Puja	25	—
Gopalpur	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Durga Puja	1	500
Gorsha	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Laxmi Puja	3	500
Jajigram	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Kali Puja	5	2,500
Kanakpur	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Durga Puja	1	500
Murarai	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	8	2,000
Ratanpur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Sivaratri	10	10,000
Rudranagar	March-April	Chaitra	Basanti Puja	8	—
Sankhulia	—	—	Muharram	1	700
Tirgram	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Kali Puja	1	300
NALHATI P.S.					
Akalipur	Sept.-Oct.-Nov.	Aswin-Kartik	Kali Puja	10	500
Atgram	Feb.-March	Falgun	Kali Puja	3	200
Bara	Feb.-March	Falgun	Buropirer Mela	8	1,500
Barla	April	Chaitra Samkranti	Kali Puja	2	3,000
Barla	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	300
Bhadrapur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Syamsundar Puja	6	2,000
Bilkandi	April	Chaitra	Gajan	2	5,000
Bujanga	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Kali Puja	3	500
Bujanga	Feb.-March	Falgun	Doljatra	6	1,500
Bujanga	April	Chaitra	Charak	1	800
Bujanga	May-June	Jyaistha	Dharmaraj Thakur Puja	6	4,000
Gosainpur	April	Chaitra	Charak Puja	1	600
Jagadhari	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Durga Puja	3	200
Kaytha	April	Chaitra	Charak	1	2,000
Kurumgram	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Siva Puja	5	800

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Lohapur	Feb.-March	Falgun	Kali Puja	7	1,000
Madhura	April-May	Baisakh	Siva Puja	2	400
Madhura	May-June	Jyaistha	Mahotsav	1	100
Nalhati	March-April	Chaitra	Siva Puja	1	100
Nalhati	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	1	300
RAMPURHAT P.S.					
Ayas	Dec.-Jan.	Poush	Makar Saptami	7	1,500
Chitaspur	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Kali Puja	3	1,500
Chandipur (Tarapith)	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Taradevi Puja	10	800
Gopalpur	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Damodarsiva Puja	15	200
Joghar	March-April	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	15	200
Kaluha	April-May	Baisakh	Baisakhi Purnima	1	500
Mandala	Jan.-Feb.	Magh	Makar Snan	15	1,500
Margram	Dec.-Jan.	Poush	Kali Puja	1	500
Podda	April-May	Baisakh	Baisakhi Purnima	1	500
Tarapur	March-April	Chaitra	—	1	700
Teldaha	Feb.-March	Falgun	Mahotsav	3	500
Udaypur	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Kali Puja	2	2,000
SAINTHIA P.S.					
Belia	April-May	Baisakh	Bairagya Chander Puja	3	1,000
Bhalia	April-May	Baisakh	Buddha Purnima	1	5,000
SURI P.S.					
Ajoy Pur	Dec.-Jan.-Feb.	Poush-Magh	Brahmadaitya Puja	1	350
Barabagan	Jan.-Feb.-March	Magh-Falgun	Krishi Silpa	75	20,000
Behira	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Sarad Pradarsani	3	10,000

Place of Occurrence	Month of Occurrence		Religious or other occasion	Duration of days	Total Attendance (Approx.)
	English Calendar	Bengali Calendar			
Bhandirban	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Rasmela	1	7,000
Dhanjabati	—	—	Urs Mela	2	7,000
Karidhya	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Goshtha Mela	1	500
Kendua	June-July	Ashad	Rathajatra	2	5,000
Kendua	Sept.-Oct.	Aswin	Saradekadasi mela (Day after Vijaya Dasami)	1	9,000
Kenbona	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Ras Jatra	1	1,000
Koma	Oct.-Nov.	Kartik	Ras Jatra	2	4,000
Nagari	Dec.-Jan.-Feb.	Poush-Magh	Brahmadaitya Puja	1	2,000
Patanda	Dec.-Jan.-Feb.	Poush-Magh	Brahmadaitya Puja	2	4,000
Pather Chapri	Feb.-March April	Falgun-Chaitra	Data Sahib	7	10,000
Purandarpur	April-May	Baisakh	Dharmarajer Puja	4	3,000
Purandarpur	January	7-13th Magh	Gosainmela	—	—
Suri Town	December	11-14th Poush	Saradamela	—	20,000

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD-TIME TRADE ROUTES AND HIGHWAYS

The earliest known reference to the absence of any pathway whatsoever in this region is contained in a Jaina tradition which alludes to Mahavira's travel in the "pathless countries of the Ladhas, in Vajjabhumi and Subbhabhumi." Later travellers like Fa-Hien in the 5th century and Hiuen Tsang two centuries later travelled quite extensively and covered many portions of Bengal. I-tsing, the next traveller, made a journey from Tamralipti to Buddha Gaya, a distance of about 60 Yojanas according to him. This led Oldham to suggest that there had long been at least two routes across the hilly country of Chotanagpur, "one leading from Banares and Gaya to the Midnapore district through the Hazaribagh and Manbhum districts, and the other through Monghyr, Santal Parganas, Birbhum and Bankura districts, via Deoghar-Baidyanath, Sarath and Vishnupur, followed by Hindu Pilgrims to their sacred shrines of Banares, Gaya, Baidyanath and Jagarnath (Puri)."[1]

In the absence of historically correct information we cannot state with certainty the state of communications in this part of the country, until we come across more definite information. Yet the movements of large armies in and through this region suggest that there were serviceable routes to facilitate such movements. Sher Khan, according to *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, "Laden with spoil and treasures from the Bengal king's capital, crossed the Ganges below Rajmahal, and entering the Birbhum district went through the hill country and circumventing the Mughal army, proceeded to Rohtasgarh in 1538."[2] Again, in the early part of 1742, an army of Maratha horse under Bhaskar Rao Pandit, swept over the Birbhum hills into the Burdwan district. Apparently, that invasion was made by the Deoghar route through the hilly country.[3] Mir Jumla, after his occupation of Monghyr with its fortress, in order to outflank Shuja, moved through the south-east part of the Monghyr district across the hills and after twelve days' toil emerged in Birbhum, marched past Suri across Belghatta,[4] which lies to the south of Suti, close to the plain where the battle of

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1 C.E.A.W. Oldham — 'Routes, old and new from Lower Bengal up the country' in Bengal Past and Present, July-September, 1924. p. 26.
2 ibid., p. 25.
3 ibid., p. 29.
4 J. N. Sarkar — History of Aurangzib, Vol. II, p. 242.

Giria took place in 1763.[1] The account given seems "to indicate that he took practically the same line that was taken by Sher Khan (in the opposite direction).[2]

The existence of road, known locally as Gaur-Badshahi Road, at least as early as A.D. 1516 is attested by an Arabic inscription referring to the digging of a well by king Hussain Shah near it[3] and traces of this road can still be seen in the south-eastern extremity of the district. This road witnessed many a strange scene — over it Daud Khan Karrani fled to Orissa in A.D. 1574, hotly pursued by Todar Mal, and next year he again marched over it in triumph to Tanda, but had to retreat in the following year along it to the south. This road came to limelight again in 1624 when Prince Khurram (afterwards the Emperor Shah Jahan), in his revolt against his father, marched over this road towards Rajmahal, driving the weak forces of the Bengal Nawab before him, and a year later he retired hurriedly along it on his way to the Deccan. This road again became a highway for contending armies in 1696 during the revolt of Subha Singh and Rahim Shah when the rebel army harried West Bengal from Midnapore to Rajmahal. Rahim Shah fled to Burdwan after his defeat at Bhagwangola, but on the outskirts of Burdwan he again suffered defeat and was killed by Prince Azim-us-Shan who moved slowly over this road from Rajmahal to Burdwan.[4]

In the Valentyn's Map of Bengal compiled from notes left by Van den Broucke, the Dutch Governor of Chinsura during 1658-64, which happens to be the first map showing roads in the tract of country now forming the Birbhum district, "Baccaressoor" is entered with one road running south-east to Burdwan and another north-east to Cossimbazar. This map, however, does not show the old Badshahi road which can still be traced in the Jangipur-Burdwan Road running for some distance along the eastern border of the district. To the north, a short length passes close to the eastern boundary of the Nalhati thana, and in the south for some miles along the eastern boundary of the Labhpur thana, from which it proceeds through Mangalkot to Burdwan.[5]

[1,2] C.E.A.W. Oldham — ibid., p. 26.
[3] Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 1861, p. 390.
[4,5] L.S.S.O.'Malley — Bengal District Gazetters: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. pp. 12-13, 79

At the beginning of the 19th century, the district had a few roads which were constructed by the Commercial Resident, Mr. Cheap for transport of goods to and from his factory at Suri — along the roads from Surul to Ganutia or to Katwa in Burdwan. The only road serviceable throughout the year was the one from Suri to Burdwan through Surul. In 1796 a road to Murshidabad was constructed but it was without bridges and drains. A road to Katwa and another to Deoghar were repaired at times by convict labour, but could not be kept in good condition owing to insufficiency of such hands. At the time of settlements the zemindars were required to pay attention to the roads in their estates and they are reported to have kept them "in a passable state of repair" when so ordered to do so by the Magistrate.[1] "Some" wrote the Magistrate in 1818, "even planted roadside trees."[2]

By 1910, there were a total of 657 miles of roads maintained by the District Board — 182 miles of metalled roads, 303 miles of unmetalled roads, and 172 miles of village roads, all fair weather tracks. The most important of these roads are given in the following table.[3]

Important Roads maintained by District Board in Birbhum: 1910

Location		*Length*	
From	*To*	*(miles)*	*Unbridged rivers*
Suri	Sainthia	$10\frac{7}{8}$	—
"	Dist. boundary on west (towards Dumka)	$8\frac{1}{2}$	—
"	Kalgram	31 [illegible]	Kopai (22nd mile)
"	Rajnagar	$14\frac{1}{2}$	—
"	Muhammad Bazar	$7\frac{1}{4}$	Mor (3rd mile)
"	Ajai river	$20\frac{1}{8}$	Bakreswar (10th mile) Sal (16th mile) Hingla (19th mile)
Bolpur	Ilambazar	13	—
"	Bengchatra	10	—
"	Sakulipur	12	—
Dubrajpur	Ilambazar	16	Sal (13th mile)
Nalhati	Nawada	11	—
Sainthia	Mahesha	11	Mor (2nd mile)

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[1] L.S.S.O.'Malley — ibid., p. 79.
[2] E. G. Drake-Brockman — ibid., p. 3.
[3] L.S.S.O.'Malley — ibid., pp. 80-81.

Location: From	Location: To	Length (miles)	Unbridged rivers
Purandarpur	Ajai river	18	Bakreswar & Kopai
Muhammad Bazar	Mollarpur	13	Dwaraka (8th mile) Kulay (12th mile)
Surul	Ganutia	$19\frac{3}{4}$*	Koi (15th mile)
Dubrajpur	Chandrapur via Bakreswar	$11\frac{1}{2}$	Bakreswar (8th mile)

"The Suri-Sainthia road and the Sainthia-Mahesha road are parts of the old road to Murshidabad, which is known to have been in existence at the end of the 18th century. The second road is part of the road from Bhagalpur to Suri (103 miles long), which is commonly known as the Dumka road. The Suri-Rajnagar road is another old road, having been formely the high road from Suri to Deoghar, which was also in existence at the end of the 18th century. The Nalhati-Nawada road forms part of the embankment of which the other part is occupied by the Nalhati branch railway. The road from Purandarpur is part of the old road from Suri to Burdwan *via* Surul, and dates back over 100 years, while the Surul-Ganutia is that made by Mr. Cheap when Commercial Resident at Surul."[1]

Road Transport

On the recommendations of the Road Development Committee formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. M. R. Jayakar in 1928, the Government of India set up in 1929 a Central Road Fund (C.R.F.) with the proceeds of a surcharge on petrol which enabled the Central Government to make annual block grants to the Provinces for subsidizing provincial work on roads. As Bengal had then no development plan worth the name, the Government appointed Mr. A. J. King as Special Officer for road development in 1934, whose survey of the Birbhum district shows that it had on 31 March 1937 a total of 2,650 miles of metalled and unmetalled roads of various descriptions, of which 242 miles of metalled (laterite) and 353 miles of unmetalled road were maintained by the District Board directly, 383 miles of unmetalled road were maintained by Local Boards working under the Central of District Boards, 28 miles of unmetalled road were maintained by the Municipalities and 29 miles of metalled

* There was no trace of the first 3 miles of this road in 1910.

[1] L.S.S.O.'Malley — ibid., pp. 80-81.

(laterite) and 1,615 miles of unmetalled road were maintained by Union Boards.[1] The total annual expenditure on upkeep (based on the average for the quinquennium ending 31 March 1937) per mile of metalled road incurred by the District Board was Rs. 134 and by the Union Boards Rs. 44, the corresponding figures of expenditure per mile of unmetalled road being Rs. 41 by the District Board, Rs. 13 by the Local Boards and Rs. 5 by the Union Boards. The Municipalities did not, however, furnish the relevant figures of expenditure for maintaining the unmetalled roads under their jurisdiction. Mr. King's plan envisaged the provision of feeder roads, neglected so far, and the improvement of roads likely to compete with the Railways as also an integrated system of communications consisting of four different categories of roads for which he examined particulars relating to 190 miles of road and 4,769 running feet of bridging (including 4 major bridges and 475 minor bridges and culverts) and also the particulars of the bridges on the existing railway in the district, in order to study the important question of obstruction to the same caused by the construction of raised embankments. A census of traffic on some of the roads selected as representative of the several classes into which the existing road system could be graded according to volume of traffic carried was also taken. The total length of improved roads, proposed by him comprised 305 miles (as detailed below) which included 125 miles of existing metalled road, 103 miles of existing unmetalled road and 77 miles of entirely new road.[2] The scheme would provide 1 mile of road in respect of every 5.6 sq. miles of area or in respect of every 3,106 heads of population in the district and would directly serve 96.2 per cent of the total area of the district.[3] It would further connect by road the district headquarters with that of the only outlying subdivision as also provide direct road connection with 13 thana, headquarters, while the headquarters of the one remaining thana, although not directly connected, would be within 5 miles of an improved road.

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[1] A. J. King — Comprehensive Report on Road Development Projects in Bengal, Vol.—I. Calcutta, 1938. p. 93.
A list of District Board Roads has been given in Vol. II, Appendix-V, pp. 93-96 of the above work.

[2,3] ibid., p. 83.

IMPROVED ROADS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT PROPOSED IN THE KING PLAN

Location		*Approxi-*	
From	*To*	*mate length in miles*	*Classification*
Ilambazar	Suri	22	Provincial–Trunk
Suri	Sultanpur	23	„ „
„	Kenduli	8	„ „
Ilambazar	Chandrapur	26	District–Main
Dubrajpur	Parsundi	17	District–Secondary
Suri	Rajnagar	15	District–Main
Ilambazar	Pakurhans	27	„ „
Purandarpur	Kogram	37	„ „
Labhpur	Rampurhat	29	„ „
Suri	Nalhati	44	„ „
Sainthia	Angargeria	6	„ „
Bhatina	Kamalpur	18	„ „
Chakgopal	Sailmail	10	„ „
Malaipur	Mitrapur	11	„ „
Chatra	Jajigram	12	District–Secondary
	Total	305 mile	

The Nagpur Plan

In 1941-42, the Government of India had frozen the C.R.F., and in 1943 convened the famous Nagpur Conference to formulate a co-ordinated road policy for the whole country. The Nagpur Plan envisaged the construction of three categories of roads— national, provincial and local. The National Highways were to carry uninterrupted road traffic across the States, the provincial roads were to serve as the main arteries of trade, commerce and administration while the local roads were to be of two types, namely, the district roads and the village roads, the former branching off from the National and State Highways and lying within 2 to 5 miles of important villages, while the latter were to be the outer link of this network connecting isolated rural settlements. The king report had to be modified in the light of the above recommendations and the Union Government finalized

a plan for construction and improvement of roads for a period of 20 years beginning from 1946-47.

Work along these lines commenced in 1948 but the whole scheme was reviewed again by the Planning Commission which laid down the following road building specifications in 1951. National and State Highways were to have 32 feet wide embankments and 12 feet wide metalled crust; curves and crossings were to bear an average speed of 40 to 50 miles per hour outside urban limits; sufficient road-side land was to be kept reserved for future widening. The district roads were to follow the same specifications except that the width of the embankments was to be 24 feet only. The village roads were to have 16 feet embankments and would remain *kutcha* or be provided with either cement concrete or brick trackways and improved culverts so that they might serve as fair weather roads.

A list of 'A' class roads taken up for construction during the First, Second and Third Five-Year Plans and since completed is given below.

STATEMENT OF ROADS TAKEN UP FOR CONSTRUCTION DURING THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PLAN PERIODS

Name and category of Road	*Length (in Km.)*	*Width (in ft.)*	*Maintained by*	*Cost of construction of high ways & other roads (in lakhs of rupees)*
1st Five Year Plan				
Mahammad Bazar-Mollarpur Road (S.H.)	22.40	12	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	13.66
Mollarpur-Rampurhat-Nalhati Road (,,)	20.00	12	,,	24.75
Suri-Dubrajpur-Ilambazar Road (,,)	48.00	12	,,	23.99
Mahammad Bazar-Sainthia Rd. (M.D.R.)	12.80	12	,,	7.11

Name and category of Road	*Length (in Km.)*	*Width (in ft.)*	*Maintained by*	*Cost of construction of high ways & other roads (in lakhs of rupees).*
Suri-Mahammad Bazar Road (,,)	16.00	12	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	5.88
Bolpur-Ilambazar Road (,,)	19.20	12	,,	7.01
Bolpur-Santiniketan Road (,,)	2.20	12	,,	3.21
Bolpur-Sriniketan Road (,,)	4.00	12	,,	2.84
Bolpur-Palitpur Road (,,)	25.00	12	,,	20.43
Suri-Ahmadpur Road (,,)	20.80	12	,,	6.06
Dubrajpur-Pandabeswar Road (,,)	16.00	10	,,	5.06
Sriniketan-Purandarpur Rd. (,,)	24.00	10	,,	—
Suri-Rajnagar Rd. (,,)	16.25	10	,,	1.46
Rampurhat-Dumka Road (,,)	7.00	12	,,	2.45
Mahammad Bazar-Kulkuri Road (V.R.)	4.00	8	,,	0.77
Ahmadpur-Kagas Rd. (,,)	3.00	8	,,	0.61
Nalhati-Bhabanandapur Road (,,)	6.00	8	,,	0.51
Bhatina-Narayanpur Road (,,)	5.30	8	,,	0.53
Bolpur-Nanoor Rd. (,,)	19.20	10	P. W. Deptt.	4.13

Name and category of Road	Length (in Km.)	Width (in ft.)	Maintained by	Cost of construction of high ways & other roads (in lakhs of rupees).
2nd Five Year Plan				
Tilpara-Massanjore Road (M.D.R.)	9.60	10	P. W. Deptt.	1.94
Ahmadpur-Kirnahar-Ramjibanpur Rd. („)	28.42	10	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	14.33
Nalhati-Rajgaon Rd. („)	16.00	10	„	17.39
Kotasur-Mayureswar Road (O.D.R.)	4.40	8	„	2.76
Kirnahar-Nanoor Road („)	7.54	10	P. W. Deptt.	5.03
Sriniketan-Purandarpur Road to Abinaspur Health Centre („)	2.20	8	—	1.03
Dubrajpur-Bakreswar-Chandrapur Rd. (O.D.R.)	19.20	10	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	10.20
Chowhatta-Hatia-Sainthia Road („)	18.40	10	„	6.97
Rampurhat-Purulia Rd. („)	10.00	10	„	5.06
Khagra-Joydeb-Kenduli Road (V.R.)	9.60	8	P. W. Deptt.	2.23
Khayrasol-Panchra Rd. („)	10.00	7	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	2.26
Birchandrapur-Hazipur-Mayureswar Road („)	12.80	8	„	6.78
Parui-Batikar Road (V.R./C.R.F.)	10.40	8	„	5.40

Name and category of Road	*Length (in Km.)*	*Width (in ft.)*	*Maintained by*	*Cost of construction of high ways & other roads (in lakhs of rupees)*
Tarapur-Birchandrapur Road (V.R.)	5.00	8	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	4.55
Rampurhat-Tarapur Rd. („)	8.00	8	„	4.58
Takipur-Kusmoor Road („)	4.00	8	„	1.90
Approach Road to Niramaya T.B. Sanatorium (S.D.F.R.)	1.20	8	„	0.37
Link Road from Hetampur-Rajbati to Dubrajpur-Ilambazar Road („)	3.06	8	„	0.43
Dubrajpur-Hetampur Feeder Road (C.D.P.)	3.52	8	„	0.73
Labhpur C.D.P.				
3rd Five Year Plan				
Bolpur-Byepass Road (M.D.R.)	6.32	12	„	3.96
Bolpur-Kankalitolla Road (O.D.R.)	7.54	10	„	3.10
Ahmadpur-Bolpur Road to Kopai Rly. Stn. („)	8.67	10	„	2.30
Ramjibanpur-Majlispur Road („)	7.20	10	„	2.27
Labhpur-Ganutia Road („)	9.60	8	„	—
Batikar to Kurmitha Road (V.R.)	3.74	8	„	1.74
Kotasur-Ramnagar Rd. („)	17.25	8	„	9.33

Name and category of Road	Length (in Km.)	Width (in ft.)	Maintained by	Cost of construction of high ways & other roads (in lakhs of rupees)
Purandarpur-Rangaipur Road („)	9.60	8	P. W. (Roads) Deptt.	4.06
Suri-Rajnagar Road to Sisal farm („)	7.62	8	„	3.15
Supur to Ajoy River Road („)	3.71	8	„	1.58
Abinaspur-Sahapur Rd. („)	10.86	8	„	2.34
Rampurhat-Dunigram Rd. („)	9.00	8	„	5.28
Mollarpur-Rampurhat-Nalhati Road to Kasthogora Centre („)	2.50	8	„	1.91
Bautia-Baidara Barrage Road („)	5.00	8	„	1.60

Vehicles & conveyances

The bullock-cart still plays a very prominent part in the economic life of the people, especially in the country-side, where it provides the most economical means of transport, mainly of goods and occasionally of passengers. Horse-drawn carts are very rare in the district, but palanquins (*palki*) are sometimes seen, especially in the rural areas for carrying passengers. While cycles can be seen in every nook and corner of the district, cycle-rickshaws are mainly concentrated in urban areas and in places of interest. The number of all such types of conveyances is not, however, available. The district had in 1966 a total of 443 licensed power-driven vehicles, of which heavy vehicles numbered 242, medium 112 and light 89, the corresponding figures in 1956 were 201, 54 and 58. There are only 3 taxis in the district at present and private cars number 93.

Public transport

The district is provided with a network of bus-services radiating mostly from Suri, Sainthia, Bolpur and Rampurhat and providing cheap communication facilities to almost every place of some importance not only within the district, but also several

such places in the adjoining districts, even crossing the boundaries of the State. The fare charged is 6 paise per mile for *kutcha* road and 5 paise for *pucca* road. A list of bus routes, the length of each route, the number of buses per route and the number of trips per bus is given below.

PARTICULARS OF BUS ROUTES IN OPERATION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT

Name of bus route	*Length*	*No. of buses per route*	*No. of trips per bus each day*
Suri-Visva Bharati *via* Ilambazar	42 miles	4	2
Suri-Sainthia	12 „	5	2
Suri-Ahmadpur	14 „	7	2
Suri-Rajnagar	15 „	6	3
Suri-Bolpur *via* Panrui	21 „	6	2
Suri-Lokepur *via* Dubrajpur	32 „	4	2
Suri-Bhimgarh *via* Dubrajpur	22 „	2	2
Suri-Kapistha-Darsandaria	20 „	1	2
Suri-Kapistha-Baliharpur	17 „	1	2
Suri-Rampurhat *via* Mollarpur	31 „	7	1
Suri-Amjora	9 „	3	2
Suri-Joydev-Kenduly *via* Dubrajpur	22 „	2	2
Suri-Dubrajpur *via* Bakreswar	23 „	3	2
Suri-Kamraghat *via* Sainthia and Mayureswar	20 „	1	2
Suri-Ganutia *via* Ahmadpur & Labhpur	20 „	1	2
Suri-Kurmitha *via* Panrui	19 „	2	2
Suri-Sainthia *via* Mahammad Bazar		2	2
Suri-Kurmitha *via* Batikar	19 „	1	2
Suri-Palitpur *via* Panrui & Bolpur	38 „	1	2
Suri-Birchandrapur *via* Sainthia, Mayureswar	28 „	2	2
Suri-Lokepur	33 „	1	2
Suri-Kirnahar *via* Bolpur	39 „	1	2
Suri-Nanoor *via* Ahmadpur-Kirnahar	32 „	1	2
Sainthia-Ulkunda	14 „	2	2

Name of bus route	*Length*	*No. of buses per route*	*No. of trips per bus each day*
Sainthia-Lokepara	14 miles	1	1
Sainthia-Ganutia *via* Chowhatta & Labhpur	18 "	2	2
Sainthia-Rampurhat	31 "	1	2
Sainthia-Ramnagar		1	2
Sainthia-Baliharpur	26 "	1	2
Sainthia-Rajnagar *via* Suri	27 "	1	2
Sainthia-Birchandrapur	15 "	1	2
Bolpur-Palitpur	16 "	6	2
Bolpur-Kirnahar *via* Nanoor	17 "	7	2
Bolpur-Joydev-Kenduli *via* Ilambazar	28 "	1	2
Bolpur-Rampurhat	53 "	2	1
Bolpur-Nachansagram		1	2
Bolpur-Rajnagar *via* Ilambazar-Tantipara	48 "	1	2
Bolpur-Daskalgram *via* Nanoor	21 "	1	2
Bakreswar-Rampurhat *via* Kotasur-Birchandrapur-Tarapith	56 "	1	1
Bhadrapur-Bhabanandapur *via* Nalhati	--	1	2
Visva Bharati-Tantipara *via* Ilambazar	—	1	2
Lokepur-Joydev-Kenduli *via* Dubrajpur	—	1	2
Narayanpur-Bishnupur *via* Rampurhat	21 "	5	2
Narayanpur-Tarapith *via* Rampurhat	18 "	1	2
Rampurhat-Khidirpur	15 "	2	2
Rampurhat-Ghosegram *via* Birchandrapur	16 "	1	2
Rampurhat-Ghosegram *via* Tarapith-Mollarpur	20 "	1	2
Rampurhat-Mitrapur-Murarai		1	2
Rampurhat-Chandpara *via* Hansan	12 "	1	2
Rampurhat-Dunigram	12 "	1	2
Rampurhat-Birchandrapur *via* Tarapith	12 "	1	2

Name of bus route	Length	No. of buses per route	No. of trips per bus each day
Rampurhat-Salbhadra *via* Mollarpur	21 miles	1	2
Rampurhat-Bhimgarh	53 ,,	1	2
Rampurhat-Lohapur *via* Nalhati	—	1	2

Bsides, the following routes provide inter-district and inter-State communication facilities (the number of buses per route is given within brackets): Suri-Bankura (2), Suri-Durgapur (5), Suri-Burdwan (1), Suri-Berhampore (3), Bolpur-Durgapur (1), Sainthia-Berhampore (7), Sainthia-Panchthupi (2), Sainthia-Raghunathganj (3), Dubrajpur-Kundahit (1), Suri-Dumka via Massanjore (7), Suri-Deoghar (2), Suri-Bhagalpur (1), Sainthia-Dumka via Massanjore (2) via Asanboni (2), Rampurhat-Dumka (10), Murarai-Dumka (4) and Murarai-Pakur (1). All these bus services are privately owned except that only 4 buses belonging to the West Bengal State Transport Corporation ply on the Suri-Durgapur route.

RAIL ROADS

Origin of railways in the district

The first railway line in the district was opened in 1859 when the Sahibganj loop line of the Old East Indian Railway was extended beyond the Ajoy river. This is a broad gauge section (5′—6″) with a total length of 65.50 miles (105 Km.) falling within the district.[1] The present Nalhati-Azimganj section of the Eastern Railway, originally constructed by the Indian Branch Railway Company as a 4 ft. gauge line and opened on 21 December 1863 was taken over by the State on 31 March 1872 and it came to be known as Nalhati State Railway. It was incorporated with the East Indian Railway on 1 April 1892 and was opened as a broad gauge track (5½ ft.) on 15 July 1892.[2] The length of this section within the district is 11 miles (18 Km.). The construction of the branch line from Sainthia to Andal, also a broad gauge line with a length of 30.50 miles (49 Km.), was completed by 1906 and was opened on 10 December 1906.[3] The Bhimgarh-Palasthali broad gauge line with a total length of 11 miles (18 Km.) within the district was opened on 15 May 1922.[4]

[1-4] A. J. King—Comprehensive Report on Road Development Projects in Bengal, Government of Bengal, Calcutta, 1938, Vol-II, p. 91; History of Indian Railways corrected up to 31 March 1951, Government of India, New Delhi, 1954, p. 66.

Besides, the district is also served by a narrow gauge line (2′—6″) from Ahmadpur to Katwa which was opened in 1917 under the ownership and management of M/s. McLeod & Co. It was taken over by the Eastern Railway with effect from 1 January 1957.[1] The district is now served by the Howrah and Asansol Divisions of the Eastern Railway.

The aforesaid five sections of the Eastern Railway with a total length of about 136 miles serve the district fairly well, but the tracts lying in the centre and east of the southern part of the district being somewhat far from the railways, are served to a lesser extent than the other parts. The district contains approximately 8 miles of railway in respect of each 100 sq. miles of country.

The following railway stations of the Eastern Railway fall in the district of Birbhum: on the Sahibganj Loop section — Bolpur, Prantik, Kopai, Ahmadpur Jn., Bataspur, Sainthia Jn., Godadharpur, Mollarpur, Tarapith Road, Rampurhat, Swadinpur, Nalhati Jn., Chatra, Murarai, Banshloi Bridge and Rajgram; on the Azimganj-Nalhati section — Takipur and Lohapur; on the Andal-Sainthia section — Bhimgara, Panchra, Dubrajpur, Chinpai, Suri, Kunuri, Sainthia; on the Bhimgara-Palasthali section — Raswan and on the Ahmadpur-Katwa section — Chowhatta Halt Gopalpur Halt, Labhpur, Mahespur Halt, Kirnahar and Daskalgram. Except the Sahibganj Loop section, which is well served by several long distance trains and a few local trains, all other sections are not so well served.

Passenger & goods traffic

The unserviceable nature of the rivers flowing through the district has been responsible for the absence of river-borne traffic in this district. Naturally, the transport requirement of the district has to be met by the two wings of the modern inland transport, the rail-transport and the road-transport. The statement in Appendix A of this Chapter gives the latest available

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The Government purchased the property owned by the East Indian Railway company which was worked by a reconstituted company till the end of 1924. Following the recommendations of a special committee formed under the Chairmanship of Sir W. Acqorth in 1920, to go into the evils of mixing up railway revenues with those of the general administration and unsuitability of company management of Indian Railways, the Government took over the East Indian Railway on 1 January 1925 by terminating the previous contract with it. (History of Indian Railways corrected up to 31 March 1951, p. 65 and J. Johnson—The Economics of Indian Rail Transport, Bombay, 1963, p. 117).

[1] Source: Chief Commercial Superintendent, Eastern Railway, Calcutta.

figures in respect of passenger and goods traffic originating from the stations of the Eastern Railway within the district as also the corresponding earnings during the years 1965-66, 1966-67 and 1967-68.[1]

Role of the railway in the economic life of the district

Since the district is very backward industrially, its industrial products are few. Yet in the transportation of the products of its cottage industries as also of the Mayurakshi Cotton Mills, railways no doubt play a significant role; more, however, in carrying the agricultural products within and to places outside the district. Bulk of the imported goods is also carried by the railways. The steady increase in the passenger and goods traffic as betrayed by the statement in Appendix A is an indication of the increasing role of the railways in the economic life of district.

WATERWAYS BRIDGES & FERRIES

As observed by King[2] in 1938, the district is practically bereft of river borne traffic. The only navigable rivers are the Mor and the Ajoy which are exclusively used by small boats plying during the rains and then only down stream and on certain reaches of the rivers.

The following road bridges over the rivers and rivulets flowing through this district deserve mention: Mayurakshi bridge (1013 ft.) near Tilpara dam, Mayurakshi bridge (600 ft.) near Panchthupi, Ajoy bridge (1747 ft.) on Panagarh-Ilambazar State Highway, Bakreswar bridge (275 ft.) on Panagarh-Ilambazar State Highway, Bakreswar bridge (217 ft. 4 in.) on the Dubrajpur-Chandrapur District Highway, Bakreswar bridge (274 ft.) on Suri-Dubrajpur Road, Chandrabhaga bridge (200 ft.) on Suri-Dubrajpur Road, Sal bridge (221 ft.) on Ilambazar-Dubrajpur Road, Kulia bridge (101 ft.) on Mollarpur-Mahammad Bazar Road, Dwarka bridge (281 ft.) near Deochati and Kopai bridge (140 ft.) on the Sriniketan-Purandarpur Road.[3]

A statement of road bridges constructed during the first three plan periods along with the type and utility as also period and cost of construction is given in Appendix C.

Excluding minor privately owned ferries there were, at the beginning of the current century, nine public ferries in the district, controlled by the District Board. At present, only one ferry, the one across the Dwaraka river on the Mollarpur-

[1] Source: Chief Commercial Superintendent, Eastern Railway, Calcutta.
[2] A. J. King—op. cit., p. 80.
[3] L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers, Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910. pp. 81-82. A. J. King—loc. cit.

Kotasur Road is maintained by the Birbhum Zilla Parishad and those across Mayurakshi, Sal, Hinglo, Ajoy, Laghata and Brahmani have been taken over by Government in course of taking over the connecting roads.[1].

TRAVEL AND TOURIST FACILITIES

Transport facilities available in this district has been described earlier in this Chapter. Almost all important places in this district are connected by a network of bus services. Such services now extend far beyond the border of the district to the adjoining districts of Murshidabad and Burdawn and to the districts of Dumka, Deoghar and Bhagalpur in the adjoining state of Bihar. For a short travel, the cycle rickshaws serve as the most convenient medium of transport and are available in almost all places of interest. The Tourist Bureau of the State Government arranges occasional trips from Calcutta to Santiniketan and Bakreswar and prior information thereof is given to the intending tourists through press advertisements. The best time to visit the district is autumn and spring, though a sizeable proportion of the tourists prefer winter even because of numerous fairs and festivals occurring at that time — not to speak of the Pous and Magh melas at Santiniketan and Sriniketan. Places attractive to the tourists have been described later in Chapter XVI and availability of accommodation is indicated in the statement in Appendix D.

POST TELEGRAPHS AND TELEPHONES

In 1910, there were 68 post offices in the district and the number of postal articles delivered in 1908 were 2,017, 964, including 6,23,350 letters, 1,114,858 postcards, 82,472 packets, 1,45,574 newspapers and 21,710 parcels; while the values of money-orders, outgoing and incoming were Rs. 1,102,157 and Rs. 5,98,539 respectively and the amount deposited in 3,292 Savings Bank Accounts were Rs. 1,64,088.[2] There were postal telegraph offices at Suri, Bolpur, Hetampur, Rajbati, Murarai, Nalhati. Rampurhat, and Sainthia.[3]

There were a total of 94 post offices in the district in 1947. At present, for a population of 14.56 lakhs there are 326 post

[1] Source. Administrator, Zilla Parishad, Birbhum.

[2,3] L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. p. 22.

offices in the district. They are spread out as follows: one Head Office at Suri, 40 Sub-Offices and 285 Branch Offices. Only 315 villages out of a total of 2,486 villages are directly served by post offices. The average number and class of postal articles handled in these post offices of the district per month (March 1969) were as follows: Money Orders issued 25,679, Money Orders recived 22,481, Registered letters received 17,635, Registered Parcels received 1,085, Insured letters received 381, Insured Parcels received 108.[1] (A list of Post Offices in the district is given in Appendix B).

Telegraph

There is no departmental telegraph office in the district. The following eighteen are combined Post and Telegraph offices.

1. Ahmadpur
2. Bolpur
3. Chandidas Nanoor
4. Dubrajpur
5. Hetampur
6. Kirnahar
7. Labhpur
8. Murarai
9. Mollarpur
10. Nalhati
11. Niramay Giridanga
12. Paikar
13. Rampurhat
14. Sainthia
15. Santiniketan
16. Suri
17. Srinıketan
18. Rajnagar

Telephones

There were in all 1,017 telephones in September 1970 distributed as follows:

Exchange	Number of telephones
1. Dubrajpur	82
2. Suri	265
3. Bolpur	265
4. Ahmadpur	33
5. Labhpur	23
6. Kirnahar	23
7. Mahammad Bazar	9
8. Sainthia	135
9. Rampurhat	131
10. Nalhati	35
11. Mollarpur	16

[1] Source: Superintendent of Post Offices, Suri.

APPENDIX A

Passenger and Goods Traffic during 1965-66, 1966-67 and 1967-68 at stations on Eastern Railway within Birbhum District

Railway Stations	Year	No. of outward passengers (in thousand)	Earnings (in thousand rupees)	Volume of outward goods (in thousand tonnes)	Earnings (in thousand rupees)	Volume of inward goods (in thousand tonnes)	Earnings (in thousand rupees)
Bolpur	1965-66	507.4	696.0	5.7	518.6	19.6	419.0
	1966-67	555.4	794.3	52.6	740.7	14.0	427.4
	1967-68	607.2	925.8	27.5	352.8	—	—
Prantik	1967-68	1.7	1.1	—	—	—	—
Kopai	1965-66	72.0	31.0	1.5	16.7	0.1	0.2
	1966-67	80.0	30.7	3.1	33.6	3.6	34.0
	1967-68	82.4	35.3	63.5	138.5	—	—
Ahmadpur Jn.	1965-66	218.6	229.9	21.4	260.5	10.2	361.0
	1966-67	232.5	254.7	20.4	296.5	12.0	447.6
	1967-68	278.2	302.3	15.2	296.3	—	—
Bataspur	1965-66	57.0	18.1	—	—	—	—
	1966-67	59.4	18.1	—	—	—	—
	1967-68	75.4	27.6	—	—	—	—
Sainthia Jn.	1965-66	567.8	662.2	19.6	229.5	26.1	697.1
	1966-67	665.6	716.2	55.2	775.3	34.6	1,066.9
	1967-68	670.5	724.6	64.2	860.1	—	—
Gadadharpur	1965-66	87.1	42.7	0.2	1.3	0.2	1.4
	1966-67	93.5	41.2	2.3	28.1	.07	1.1
	1967-68	110.7	53.0	0.9	18.5	—	—

Mollarpur	1965-66	225.7	146.9	12.4	137.9	91.7	457.9
	1966-67	248.7	161.0	19.6	341.6	10.4	569.9
	1967-68	266.7	197.6	16.1	261.0	—	—
Tarapith Road	1965-66	43.3	19.0	—	—	—	—
	1966-67	43.7	19.0	—	—	—	—
	1967-68	49.0	22.7	—	—	—	—
Rampurhat	1965-66	774.9	944.0	116.3	1,236.4	18.2	329.4
	1966-67	946.8	1,100.2	103.6	1,197.7	20.9	669.5
	1967-68	954.5	1,163.9	47.7	718.0	—	—
Swadinpur	1965-66	64.8	34.1	.05	.2	3.7	182.2
	1966-67	58.9	24.8	—	—	5.8	383.5
	1967-68	62.2	29.2	—	—	—	—
Nalhati Jn.	1965-66	452.4	331.1	35.2	458.6	9.3	153.3
	1966-67	457.4	356.2	6.1	94.5	7.0	188.2
	1967-68	466.3	378.7	13.4	180.4	—	—
Chatra	1965-66	134.6	76.0	3.4	43.4	1.7	22.4
	1966-67	131.4	74.2	4.7	58.6	3.8	59.0
	1967-68	136.5	82.4	1.0	12.8	—	—
Murarai	1965-66	261.2	231.5	17.9	236.6	7.3	137.4
	1966-67	264.3	248.5	9.8	138.3	6.2	148.8
	1967-68	291.3	278.0	4.1	54.3	—	—
Banshloi Bridge	1965-66	107.9	90.8	1.0	7.3	.06	4.3
	1966-67	84.3	51.6	36.7	473.8	.13	23.0
	1967-68	88.7	53.4	93.8	1,090.7	—	—
Rajgram	1965-66	150.4	110.0	109.3	1,078.4	1.5	12.5
	1966-67	148.5	105.8	—	—	3.2	37.1
	1967-68	127.4	95.1	73.4	1,230.9	—	—

APPENDIX A (Contd.)

Takipur	1965-66	84.8	38.7	—	—	.22	12.9
	1966-67	94.1	41.9	—	—	.01	.4
	1967-68	110.6	52.1	—	—	—	—
Lohapur	1965-66	135.1	77.6	1.8	23.1	2.2	43.4
	1966-67	141.2	84.5	4.8	70.9	5.2	116.7
	1967-68	154.1	94.3	4.5	72.7	—	—
Kunuri	1965-66	21.0	8.8	.08	3.6	—	—
	1966-67	21.8	9.1	.2	5.7	0.2	0.2
	1967-68	24.5	10.8	6.1	1.6	—	—
Suri	1965-66	236.2	323.7	86.6	678.6	7.6	175.9
	1966-67	240.9	329.3	40.0	1,233.2	12.2	324.6
	1967-68	268.8	358.1	63.5	1,732.5	—	—
Kuchujor	1965-66	10.7	6.0	—	—	—	—
	1966-67	13.4	9.5	—	—	—	—
	1967-68	15.9	11.3	—	—	—	—
Chinpai	1965-66	31.1	26.2	0.5	4.8	.2	12.1
	1966-67	23.7	15.0	1.5	21.9	—	—
	1967-68	29.5	20.5	1.8	25.4	—	—
Dubrajpur	1965-66	142.9	154.2	14.2	152.2	8.4	206.0
	1966-67	143.2	153.5	8.3	199.0	7.3	263.5
	1967-68	159.5	177.8	10.4	182.3	—	—
Panchra	1965-66	62.2	37.7	4.1	67.2	.8	15.3
	1966-67	59.8	36.9	2.3	34.1	1.0	21.2
	1967-68	67.0	47.3	3.8	46.5	—	—
Bhimgara	1965-66	97.4	34.9	—	—	—	—
	1966-67	98.0	35.4	—	—	—	—
	1967-68	108.1	39.2	—	—	—	—

Raswan	1965-66	35.1	18.3	—	—	.2	.1
	1966-67	33.4	17.0	—	—	—	—
	1967-68	32.9	17.5	.06	.7	—	—
Chowhatta halt	1967-68	39.5	13.5	—	—	—	—
Gopalpur halt	,,	2,409.1	1,334.5	—	—	—	—
Labhpur	,,	96.9	46.8	2.5	44.7	—	—
Mahespur halt	,,	33.0	13.4	—	—	—	—
Kirnahar	,,	145.9	70.7	2.1	9.1	—	—

APPENDIX B

LIST OF POST OFFICES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT ON 1 MAY 1969

SURI H.O. *II P.C.O. (2nd Class)
BIRBHUM DIVISION, SURI.
Bara Alunda — S
Baidyanathpur — S
Baliharpur — ES
Bhurkuna — E
Bishnupur-Kulkuri — S
Chinpai — SR
Charicha — S
Damdama — E
Deucha — S
Ikra — S
Januri — S
Kabilpur — S
Kapista — E
Khatanga — S
Langulia — S
Mohubona — E
Nimdaspur
Panuria — S
Puranagram — S
Purandarpur — SI
Rampur — S
Sarenda — S
Saharakuri — S
Shahpur — R
ABINASHPUR S.O.
Batikar — SR
Gadadharpur — ES
Gargaria — S
Kurmitha — E
Mangaldihi — S
Panrui — S
Shikarpur — S
Talibpur — ES

AHMADPUR *II P.C.O.
Bagrakanda — S
Belia
Bataspur — E
Bhalkuti — S
Chahatta — SR
Chotosangra — S
Dewaschandpur — S
Hatia — SR
Konarpur
Kurumshah — S
Laghosa — E
Mohodary — S
Paharpur
Purbasiur — ES
BARHRA E.D.S.O. PCO (Phonocom)
BASWA S.O.
Laha — ES
BOLPUR BAZAR (IDDF BOLPUR) S.O. +
BOLPUR COURT (NDDF BOLPUR) EDSO +
BHADRAPUR EDSO R
BOLPUR *II P.C.O.
Albandha — S
Bahiri — S
Belhati — S
Bengchatra — S
Chandidas Nanoor — SI (Phonocom)
Charkalgram — SI
Darpasila — E
Daranda — E
Hatserandi — SR
Jalandi — SR
Laldaha — S
Mohanpur — ES
Muluk — S
Nahina — E
Pafuri — ES
Pakurhans
Panchsowa — S
Raipur — SI
Rajatpur — S
Saota — S

Sian — S
Singhee — S
Sitapur
Supur-Birbhum — S
Uchkaran
DUBRAJPUR *II P.C.O.
Bagdahari — S
Balijuri — S
Bakreswar S
Churar — S
Gopalpur-Birbhum — SI
Jahidpur — E
Jophlai — S
Kukhutia — S
Lokepur — S
Lakshminarayanpur S
Metala - S
Paigdra — E
Panchrahat — S
Rupaspur — ES
HETAMPUR RAJBATI II P.C.O.
Ghoratari — S
Jatra — S
Joydevkenduli S
Kandighi — S
Khandagram — S
Kota S
Pachhiara S
ILAMBAZAR P.C.O. (Phonocom)
Chunpalashi - E
Dhalla
Dumrul
Ghurisha S
Hedogora - S
Moukhira — S
Payer ES
Shunmuni ES
Ushardihi - E
KHOYRASOLE P.C.O. (Phonocom)
Babuijore — S
Hazratpur — S
Kankartala
Nabasan — E

Nakrakonda — S
Parsundi
Rasa — S (P.C.O.)
Sagarbhanga — E
KARIDHYA P.C.O.
Bhabanipur — S
Ganeshpur — S
Ghatdurlovpur — S
Laujore — S
Madhaipur — S
Nagori — S
Parulia Hazrapur — E
Rajganj · S
Raotara — E
Sajina — E
Tabadumra — E
KIRNAHAR II P.C.O.
Aligram — SR
Brahmanpara
Dhrubabati
Koreya
Feugram — E
Nurpur — ES
KHUJUTIPARA S.O.
Bandar
Brahmankhanda - E
Gonnaserandi — S
Sakodda —
Saraswatibazar RS
Thupsara — S
LABHPUR *II P.C.O.
Abadanga — S
Barah — S
Bagdowra - - S
Bunia — E
Bipratikuri - S
Dwarka — S
Gopalpur — S
Kamadpur —
Kuniara — ES
Kurunnahar — S
Kurumba

Purbakadipur — S
Pushulia
Tantinapara — E
Thiba — S
MAHAJANPATTI SO (NDDF Rampurhat)
MALLARPUR II P.C.O.
Birchandrapur — SI
Bharkata — ES
Dabuk — ES
Dakshingram — S
Damra — E
Dighalgram — S
Ganpur — S
Ghoshgram — ES
Kanachi — ES
Kastogora — S
Katigram — S
Makdamnagar — S
Mohula — S
Pakhuria — S
Sonakpur — E
Sandhigorabazar — S
Sekhpur — E
Sonz — S
Tarachua
Turigram — SI
MARGRAM E.D.S.O. (Phonocom)
MAHAMMAD BAZAR E.D.S.O.
MAHAMMAD BAZAR TOWNSHIP E.D.S.O.
P.C.O. II (Phonocom) NDDF MD. BAZAR
MAYURESWAR E.D.S.O. P.C.O. (Phonocom)
MURARAI *II P.C.O.
Amdole — S
Baliapalsa — S
Bipranandigram — S
Bangsabati — ES
Bhimpur — ES
Bonmohurapur — ES
Dhananjoypur — ES
Harwa
Hilora — S
Jajigram — SI

Kahinagar — ES
Kathia — S
Kalahapur — E
Malaypur — S
Mitrapur — S
Mayagram — E
Ramchandrapur — S
NALHATI TOWNSHIP (NDDF Nalhati Birbhum) +
NALHATI *II P.C.O.
Ayas — S
Bahutali — S
Bannior — S
Bara — S
Barla — S
Barua-Gopalpur — S
Bautia — S
Bhabanipur-Bhatra — S
Bhadista — E
Bhabanandapur — E
Bisor — ES
Bonha — S
Bujung — S
Chatra — SIR
Chhatina — S
Debagram — E
Duria — ES
Haridaspur — S
Haritoka — E
Jestha-Bhabanipur
Jogai — S
Kalitha — ES
Kaitha — S
Khanpur — ES
Krishnapur — S
Kurumgram — SI
Kushmore — S
Kogram — E
Lohapur — DB. SIR.
Madhura — S
Mustafadanga — E
Noapara — ES
Paikpara — S

Rudranagar — S
Shitalgram — S
Sidhora — E
Sonarkundu — S
Sultanpur — E
Tejhati — S
Umrapur — S
Ujipur — ES
NIRAMOY SANATORIUM
NIRIDANGA. II
NISCHINTAPUR (NDDF Rampurhat) +
PAIKAR II
RAJGAON E.D.S.O.R.
RAMAKRISHNA SIKSHAPITH —
(MUKUNDAPALLI) S.O.
RAMPURHAT *II P.C.O.
Balia-Mrityunjoypur — S
Barakartick-chungri S
Bishnupur — SI
Budhigram — S
Chakpara - S
Chandipur (Tarapith) - S
Chandpara — S
Dadpur — S
Dakhalbati — E
Debiparulia — S
Dekhuria - S
Dunigram — S
Kaluha — S
Kharun - S
Kharbona S
Kusumba - - S
Narayanpur S
Ningha — ES
Nonadanga — S
Popta-Sahapur
Sadinpur — E
Sandhyajole - - S
Tarapur — S
RAJNAGAR P.C.O. (Phonecom)
Joypur — E
Lauberia — S

Muktipur — S
SAINTHIA *II P.C.O.
Bagdola — S
Basudevpur — S
Brahmanbahara — E
Chhamna — S
Daspalsa — S
Dahira — ES
Derpur — S
Ganutia — SI
Jiwe — S
Kaleswar — E
Kotasur — S
Kuliara — S
Kundola — S
Kunuri — S
Mathpalsa — S
Mohurapur — S
Parulia — S
Pathai — S
Ramnagar — S
Sahora — S
Satpalsa — S
Ulkunda — S
Uchpur — E
SAINTHIA BAZAR (NDDF Sainthia) +
SANTINIKETAN II P.C.O.
Paruldanga
SRINIKETAN II P.C.O.
Benuria — S
Belatisultanpur — ES
Bergram — S
Bheramari
Digha — S
Hansra - - ES
Kasba — IS
Sattre — S
SURI BAZAR (NDDF Suri) +
SURI COLLEGE (NDDF Suri) +
SURI DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (NDDF Suri) +
TANTIPARA E.D.S.O.

Total S.Os.	—	40
Total B.Os.	—	285
B.Os. with S. B. Power	—	218

E — Experimental P.O. (Tempy.)
I — Insurance Power
R — Direct communication with R.M.S.
P.C.O. — Public Call Office
S - Sub Post Office
ED — Extra Departmental
NDDF — No Delivery Delivery From
* Telegraph on Morse System

APPENDIX C

STATEMENT OF BRIDGES CONSTRUCTED DURING THE THREE PLANS

Name of Road Bridges	*Type and utility*	*Period of construction*	*Cost of constn. (in lakhs of rupees)*	*Location*
Bridge over River Ajoy at Ilambazar	Pre-stressed concrete	1955-62	38.68	Bridge over river Ajoy at Ilambazar on the State Highway leading from Panagarh to Bolpur and Suri in the district of Birbhum.
Bridge over Bakreswar River	R. C. solid slab balanced cantilever type	1959-62	3.26	On the 8th mile of Dubrajpur-Bakreswar - Chandrapur Road
Bridge over Bakreswar River	—do—	1956-59	4.65	On the Ilambazar-Dubrajpur-Suri Road
Bridge over Kopai River	Low level submersible R.C.C. box type	1959-63	3.20	On Purandarpur-Sriniketan Road (Bolpur-Suri Road)

APPENDIX C (*Contd.*)

Name of Road Bridges	*Type and utility*	*Period of construction*	*Cost of constn. (in lakhs of rupees)*	*Location*
Bridge over Gargaria-Nala*	Submersible R.C.C. box type	—	1.41	On the 12th mile of Bolpur-Suri Road
Bridge over Dwarka River	—do—	1964-66	2.83	On Rampurhat-Tarapur Road
Bridge over Quia River*	—do—	—	6.67	On the 9th mile of Ahmadpur-Kirnahar-Ramjibanpur Road
Bridge over Brahmani River*	R.C.C. hollow box balanced cantilever type	—	—	On Mollarpur-Rampurhat-Nalhati Road

*The work of construction was not taken up till July 1969.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF DAK BUNGALOWS, ETC. IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT

Category	*Place and Location*	*Date of establishment*	*Accommodation*	*Controlling authority*
Dak Bungalow	Ahmadpur On Suri-Ahmadpur-Kirnahar Road, near Ahmadpur P.S.	1962	2 pucca rooms with bathroom and sanitary latrine attached, electrified	Chairman, Zilla Parishad, Birbhum.
,,	Bengchatra on Bolpur-Palitpur Road	1964	2 rooms	,,
,,	Bolpur On Bolpur-Santiniketan Road	1926	3 rooms with bathroom and sanitary latrine attached, electrified	,,
,,	Dubrajpur On Dubrajpur-Kanaipur Road, 2½ km. from Dubrajpur R.S.	1915	2 rooms with bathroom	,,
,,	Kotasur On Sainthia-Kandi-Berhampur Road, 8 km. from Sainthia R.S.	1914	2 rooms with sanitary latrine	,,

APPENDIX D (*Contd.*)

Dak Bungalow	Khayrasol On Dubrajpur-Khayrasol Road. 8 km from Panchra R.S.	1918	2 rooms with sanitary latrine	Chairman. Zilla Parishad, Birbhum
,,	Mahammad Bazar On Suri-Mahammad Bazar Road. 11 km. from Suri	1916	,,	,,
,,	Murarai On Murarai-Mahespur-Dumka Road, very near to Murarai R.S.	1920	2 rooms (straw thatched house)	,,
,,	Mollarpur On Makarpur-Moluty Road, very near to Mollarpur R.S.	1954	2 pucca rooms with sanitary latrine	,,

Dak Bungalow				
,,	Nalhati On Nalhati thana bazar Road, 3 km. from Nalhati R.S.	1912	2 pucca rooms with bath-room (C.I. sheet thatched)	Chairman, Zilla Parishad, Birbhum
,,	Nanur, 8 km. from Kir-nahar R.S.	—	2 rooms with bathrooms (condition not upto mark)	,,
,,	Rajnagar On Suri- Rajnagar Road	1962	2 pucca rooms with bath-room and sanitary latrine	,,
,,	Rampurhat 1½ km. near to Rampurhat R.S.	1962	New pucca buildings with 3 rooms, bathrooms and sanitary latrines	,,
,,	Sainthia near to Sainthia R.S. on Sainthia-Kandi Road	1962	2 pucca rooms with bath-rooms and sanitary latrine, electrified	,,

APPANDIX D (*Contd.*)

Dak Bungalow				
„	(i) Suri On Suri-Dumka Road, near Government Circuit House, 3 km. from Suri R.S.	1958	3 pucca rooms with bathrooms and sanitary latrine, electrified, ceiling fan fitted in each room	Chairman, Zilla Parishad, Birbhum
	(ii) Suri (Old Suri Bungalow)	1888	—	„
Rest House	Debgram, P.O. Bergram	—	—	Executive Engineer, Mayurakshi South Canals Division, Santiniketan
„	Dhalla	—	—	„
„	Kultore, P.O. Kurmitha	—	—	„

Rest House „	Shyambati, Santiniketan 4 km. from Bolpur R.S	—	3 rooms	Executive Engineer, Mayurakshi South Canals Division, Santiniketan
Inspection Bungalow	Kirnahar at Irrigation Colony, 1 km. from Kirnahar R.S.	—	2 rooms	„
„	Massanjore, S.P.	—	—	„
„	Suri at 33 K.V. Sub-Station compound	—	2 rooms	Divisional Engineer, West Bengal State Electricity Board, Suri
„	Sainthia, 1 km. from Sainthia R.S.	—	„	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Birbhum Division, Suri
„	Santiniketan ('Suravikunja'), 4 Km. from Bolpur R.S.	—	„	„

APPENDIX D (*Contd.*)

Inspection Bungalow	Bolpur	—	2 rooms	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. (Roads) Burdwan Construction Division, Burdwan
"	Bakreswar	—	"	"
"	Ilambazar	—	"	"
Tourist Lodge	Santiniketan	—	Air-conditioned 5 double-seated and 12 single seated rooms, non-airconditioned 10 double seated and 8 single seated rooms, dormitory 39 seats	Director of Tourism Govt. of West Bengal
Ratan Kutir	"	—	6 rooms	Registrar, Visva Bharati

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

LIVELIHOOD PATTERN

In the Census of 1961 the total population of the district is divided into two broad categories of workers and non-workers, the former comprising the following nine livelihood classes: (i) cultivator, (ii) agricultural labourer, (iii) mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, plantations, orchards and allied spheres, (iv) household industry, (v) manufacturing other than household industry, (vi) construction, (vii) trade and commerce, (viii) transport, storage and communications, and (ix) other services. The distribution of the district population according to this classification is given in the following table.

COMPOSITION OF LIVELIHOOD CLASSES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT

Category NO.	*Description*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*
	Total No. of persons enumerated	14,46,158	7,32,922	7,13,236
I-IX	Total Workers	4,51,314	3,83,793	67,521
I	Cultivators	1,97,122	1,80,172	16,950
II	Agricultural Labourers	1,38,172	1,10,647	27,525
III	Mining, Quarrying, etc.	11,998	10,766	1,232
IV	Household Industry	21,057	11,627	9,430
V	Manufacturing other than Household Industry	12,934	9,699	3,235
VI	Construction	2,767	2,678	89
VII	Trade & Commerce	15,780	14,635	1,145
VIII	Transport, Storage and Communications	4,386	4,326	60
IX	Other Services	47,098	39,243	7,855
	Non-Workers	9,94,844	3,49,129	6,45,715

Of the total workers, primary sector accounts for 76.7 per cent, secondary sector 8.5 per cent and tertiary sector 14.8 per cent,

the corresponding percentages for the State being 57.4, 18.4 and 24.2 respectively. The statement below gives the distribution of 1,000 workers by persons, males and females and by the livelihood classes for the district as compared with the corresponding figures for the State.

	Birbhum District			West Bengal		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total Workers I-IX	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
I	437	470	251	385	388	368
II	306	289	408	153	144	211
III	26	28	18	50	44	90
IV	47	30	140	42	30	122
V	29	25	48	114	124	49
VI	6	7	1	13	15	3
VII	35	38	17	75	83	23
VIII	10	11	1	34	38	4
IX	104	102	116	134	134	130

The following statement gives the percentages of total male and female workers to total persons, total males and total females respectively for the district and the State for total, rural and urban areas separately.

		Pecentages of workers to total		
		Persons	Males	Females
Birbhum District	Total	31.21	52.36	9.47
	Rural	31.35	52.70	9.64
	Urban	29.32	48.21	6.93
West Bengal	Total	33.16	53.98	9.43
	Rural	32.67	53.47	10.62
	Urban	34.66	55.38	5.12

Another table shows the distribution of 1,000 workers according to the nine livelihood classes in the urban and rural areas of the district.

	Livelihood classes								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Rural	464	323	28	48	20	5	23	4	85
Urban	44	65	8	31	141	28	210	92	382

The proportion of agricultural labourers in this district is very high, accounting for 30.6 per cent of the total workers as against 15.3 per cent in the entire State of West Bengal. The maximum incidence of this category of workers is to be found in the police station of Mahammad Bazar with 38 per cent of the workers, closely followed by Dubrajpur and Ilambazar with 36 per cent, Murarai and Mayureswar with 35 per cent and Rampurhat with 31 per cent.

The proportion of workers among the Scheduled castes is higher than the general population of the district, accounting for 35.9 per cent against 31.2 per cent for the district. Although the same proportion of agricultural workers will be found among the general workers and Scheduled caste workers, the latter are engaged as agricultural labourers in higher proportion than the general workers. While among the general workers the percentage of cultivators is 43.7 and that of agricultural labourers 30.6, among the Scheduled castes the corresponding percentages are 24.9 and 49.4 respectively. The proportion of agricultural workers among the Scheduled castes is further higher in the rural sector where 26 per cent of them is engaged as cultivators and 51.6 per cent as agricultural labourers.

Among the Scheduled tribes, the proportion of workers is far more pronounced. Of a total of 1,06,860 tribals, 53,337 persons were enumerated as workers in the census of 1961, which works out roughly to 50 per cent. Among the male population the percentage of workers is 59.22 and among the females 40.61. A higher percentage of workers is to be found in the urban sector which claimed 58.16 per cent as against 49.81 per cent in the rural sector. Majority of the tribal workers, that is, nearly 87 per cent are employed in the agricultural sector—the break-up being 40.36 per cent for cultivators and 46.58 per cent for agricultural labourers. In the rural sector, 40.93 per cent of the tribals are engaged as cultivators and 46.76 per cent as agricultural labourers.

Among the Santals the percentage of cultivators is 42.24 and of agricultural labourers 46.42. Only 5.46 per cent of the Santal workers are in other services. Among the Koras 61.92 per cent are engaged as agricultural labourers and only 18.67 per cent as cultivators. Other services claimed 13.57 per cent of the Kora workers.

Occupational classification of non-agricultural workers

The non-agricultural workers of the district are classified according to their occupations in the following table which shows the relative importance of the various avocations.

Occupational categories	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
Professional, technical and related workers	8,259	7,329	930
Administrative, executive and managerial workers	1,275	1,238	37
Clerical and related workers	6,255	6,221	34
Sales Workers	14,985	13,882	1,103
Farmers, fishermen, hunters, loggers and related workers	13,169	11,576	1,593
Miners, quarrymen and related workers	836	829	7
Workers in transport and Communications	2,647	2,646	1
Craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not classified elsewhere	53.445	37,578	15,867
Service, sports and recreation workers	13,718	10,277	3,441
Workers not classified by occupation	1,431	1,398	33
Grand Total	1,16.020	92,974	23,046

Numerical details of the various categories of non-working population of the district are given in the table below.

(In thousand)

Categories of non-working population	District total		Rural total		Urban total	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Full-time students	87.0	34.1	75.8	28.8	11.3	5.3
Persons in household duties	—	298.9	—	280.5	—	18.4
Dependents, infants and disabled	246.6	302.5	233.0	283.6	13.6	18.9
Retired, rentier or persons with independent means	2.7	2.6	1.8	2.5	0.9	0.1
Beggars, vagrants, etc.	3.5	1.9	3.3	4.6	0.2	0.2
Inmates of penal, mental and charitable institutions	3.1	2.6	3.0	2.6	0.1	—
Persons seeking employment for the first time	3.4	—	2.4	—	1.0	—
Persons employed before, but now out of employment and seeking work	2.8	0.1	1.5	0.1	1.2	—
Total	349.1	645.7	320.8	602.7	28.3	42.9

Prices

Prices of rice, the staple foodcrop of the district, though remained more or less steady during the period from 1788 to 1872, registered gradual rise thereafter and became sharp and pronounced since 1886. The extent of increase in the prices of rice during the last two decades will be evident from the following table :[1]

(Prices per standard maund of 40 seers)

Variety of rice	Year 1788	1872	1886	1908
Finest rice	1.56	1.56	2.08	10.00
Fine ,,	1.22	1.35	—	8.00
Common ,,	1.05	1.30	1.83	5.00

Price movement since 1909 showed downward tendency, when the average price per maund of common rice during the period

[1] L.S.S.O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. p. 66.

1909-13 stood at Rs. 3.88. Even the outbreak of the First World War did not have much impact on the price level, since the average price for the same variety of rice was only Rs. 4.46 per maund during the war-years, 1914-18. The next decade, following the conclusion of the war in 1918, witnessed an upward trend in price movement and in 1928 it rose to Rs. 7.16 per maund and the average for the decade rose to Rs. 6.41 per maund (for the common variety). The economic depression of the thirties of the present century reversed this trend and rice price gradually moved downwards and underwent reduction to the extent of about 57 per cent by 1938 as compared with the price level of 1928. The Second World War pushed up the price and it reached the peak of Rs. 32 per maund in August 1943 which is over 8 times higher than the average of Rs. 3.90 a maund prevailing in the corresponding month in 1939. This alarming market condition was, however, short-lived and by December of the same year rice price came down to Rs. 12 per maund. During the following three years prices remained around this level, but since 1947, prices went on increasing in spite of various counteracting measures adopted by the government, which were, of course, withdrawn in 1954 in the wake of a bumper crop throughout the country with resultant impact, though of short duration, upon the price level too. The following years are a record of progressive increase in price level which necessitated re-imposition of various regulatory measures by the government since 1964, but the phenomenon goes on unchecked. The two tables A and B below show the extent of rise in prices of common rice during the period 1947-62 and 1963-68 respectively.

TABLE A

Years	*Price per maund of common rice (in rupees)*	*Years*	*Price per maund of common rice (in rupees)*
1947	12.58	1955	17.37
1948	14.92	1956	—
1949	16.31	1957	22.46
1950	17.53	1958	—
1951	18.78	1959	23.87
1952	21.83	1960	23.81
1953	19.16	1961	20.88
1954	15.91	1962	—

TABLE B

Years	*Prices per quintal of common rice (in rupees)*	*Years*	*Prices per quintal of common rice (in rupees)*
1963	80.14	1966	91.00
1964	70.86	1967	154.00
1965	79.00	1968	129.00

The following statement on the index number of retail prices of selected food articles at Suri (base: November 1950=100) during the years 1956, 1961 and 1965 gives an idea of the price movements thereof during the years in question.

INDEX NUMBER OF RETAIL PRICES OF SELECTED FOOD ARTICLES AT SURI CENTRE*

Commodities	*1956*	*1961*	*1965*
Rice	121	127	159
Rice products	109	117	158
Wheat products	101	100	113
Mug	87	100	186
Musur	92	91	178
Kalai	111	117	221
Other pulses	86	112	191
Salt	98	101	120
Sugar	109	139	150
Potatoes	44	45	59

Wages

In 1910, O'Malley noted the prevailing system of payment, wholly in kind, to the agricultural labourers of this district, who were usually employed during the year and were given one-third of the produce at the time of harvest less the advances made to them.[1] This system was known as the *Krishani* system.[2] Though this form of employment of agricultural labourers throughout the year is still in vogue, yet the significant rise in agricultural

* Source: State Statistical Bureau, Calcutta.

[1,2] L.S.S.O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910. p. 66.

prices after the Second World War has partly replaced the system of payment in kind by cash payment. At present, this category of agricultural labourers, known as *mahindars*, are paid cash wage usually of Rs. 100 annually – proportionate amount being paid monthly – besides two principal meals, tiffin in the form of *muri* (fried rice) and *gur* (molasses) and *bidi*. Sometimes, instead of taking meals and tiffin at the residence of the employer, they accept proportionate quantity in grains for home consumption. They also receive such perquisites as clothings thrice during the year.

The agricultural labourers who work on daily wage basis are known as '*munish*'. During the decade from 1955-56 to 1965-66, their daily wages do not seem to have advanced much, rather a slight fall is registered in certain cases, as will be evident from the table below:

AVERAGE DAILY WAGES OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (IN CASH) DURING 1955-56[1] AND 1965-66[2]

		Field labourers			*Other agricultural labourers*			*Herdsmen*		
Year	Hours of duty	Male	Female	Child	Male	Female	Child	Male	Female	Child
1955-56	8	1.50	1.10	–	1.62	1.10	—	1.22	.87	.81
1965-66	8	1.67	1.33	-	1.55	1.33	-	.64	.54	.88

At present, the male agricultural labourers usually receive at the time of sowing, a daily wage of Rs 2.50 in cash along with one kilogramme of rice, *muri* (fried rice) approximately 250 gms. by weight and *bidi* worth 12 paise, while their female counterparts get 50 paise less by way of cash wage, other perquisites remaining the same. The wages both in cash and kind, however, fall slightly at the time of harvesting.

The daily wages of carpenters and masons are usually between Rs. 5 and Rs. 6 in the district at present.

Cost of living index

The following table indicates how the rise in the prices of food articles, as noticed earlier, caused corresponding rise in the general cost of living for all expenditure groups, because of the former's greater weight in domestic consumption.

[1,2] Source: Directorate of Agriculture, West Bengal

COST OF LIVING INDEX
(Base : November 1950=100; Centre: Suri)

Items of consumption	Year	Expenditure levels (Rs.) 1-100	101-200	201-350	351-700	701 and above
	1956	104.2	102.7	97.4	97.9	95.6
Food	1961	112.4	110.7	103.8	104.9	102.1
	1966	164.9	161.0	151.4	152.7	147.8
	1956	105.3	104.1	100.9	101.4	100.2
All	1961	116.0	115.1	110.9	112.5	110.6
combined	1966	158.8	153.4	145.1	144.9	138.2

Rural family budgets

The statement in Appendix B compiled from the Re-survey report on the village Sahajapur under the P.S. Bolpur of this district published by the Agro-Economic Research Centre, Santiniketan gives a fair idea of the trend of family budgets in rural areas over the period 1955-56 and 1960-61. The statement gives relevant information about per capita annual expenditures on different items of consumption, by the different occupation groups as classified by the 1951 Census. It will be evident from the table that there has been a rise in the per capita annual expenditure among all the occupational groups, but the rise in terms of real expenditure (actual expenditure deflated by price-index) has been more pronounced only among the cultivators of land wholly and mainly owned and rent-receiving groups where per capita real income (Appendix A) has also risen substantially during the period. Yet in their case the increase in expenditure has been proportionately less than the increase in income. Among all other groups, per capita real expenditure has declined. It will be further noticed that "the increase/decrease per capita real income has affected the expenditure on non-food items. That is, the occupational groups which have shown increases in the per capita real income have spent a greater amount of the increased income on non-food items, and the occupational groups which have shown decreases in the per capita real income have curtailed their expenditure on non-food items rather than food items."[1]

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[1] Madan Gopal Ghosh—Studies in Rural Change, Sahajapur: West Bengal, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, pp. 58-59, 61, 65.

Urban family budgets

The statement in the following table, prepared by the State Statistical Bureau, West Bengal, shows the trend of family budgets in Suri town during the period 1950-51 to 1960-61.

PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE ON DIFFERENT GROUPS OF ITEMS OF CONSUMPTION BY DIFFERENT EXPENDITURE LEVELS[1]

Groups of items of consumption	*Year*	Centre : Suri *Monthly Expenditure levels (in rupees)* *1-100*	*101-200*	*201-350*	*351-700*	*701 and above*
Food	1950-51	70.01	63.53	56.57	48.35	38.96
	1955-56	68.44	58.89	56.66	47.23	39.12
	1960-61	70.90	62.48	53.98	50.57	49.07
Clothing	1950-51	5.31	5.72	5.39	5.48	4.77
	1955-56	6.94	7.75	8.11	7.91	7.80
	1960-61	6.81	6.81	7.07	7.12	8.30
Fuel & Light	1950-51	6.47	4.84	4.51	3.14	3.73
	1955-56	7.10	5.07	5.19	4.62	3.70
	1960-61	5.93	5 36	5.28	4.07	2.98
Housing	1950-51	2.07	4.04	3.74	3.28	5.70
	1955-56	2.77	5 41	6.19	7.75	7.30
	1960-61	3.02	5.83	4.40	2.60	11.47
Miscel-laneous	1950-51	16.14	21.87	29.79	39.75	46.84
	1955-56	14.75	22 88	24.85	32.89	42.08
	1960-61	13.34	19.52	29.27	35.64	28.18
Total	1950-51	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	1955-56	100.00	100 00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	1960-61	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Levels of living

The Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, conducted socio-economic survey on the village of Sahajapur under P.S. Bolpur of this district first in 1956 and then in 1961 for re-survey. The village is located at a distance of 8 km. from the Bolpur town. Its findings present an interesting study of the changes taking place in the economy of the village

[1] Source: State Statistical Bureau, West Bengal.

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DILIP K. KHAN

Sahajapur village survey

over the period of 5 years. As will be evident from the table in Appendix A of this chapter, per capita income of the village has registered an increase of about 42 per cent during the period. Among the agricultural classes, the highest increase to the tune of 62 per cent has been recorded by the cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned, followed by 43 per cent in respect of the rent-receiving group, 22 per cent in respect of the cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned and 15 per cent in respect of the agricultural labourers. Among the non-agricultural classes, the highest increase in the per capita income, to the extent of 111 per cent, has been recorded by the trading group. Other occupation groups, namely, production other than cultivation and services record small increases of only 6 and 15 per cents respectively in the per capita income. In terms of real income (actual income deflated by consumer price index numbers), the village records an increase in per capita real income by 21 per cent. Trading group accounted for the highest increase in the per capita real income which was 77 per cent, while cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned, rent-receivers and cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned showed increases of 41, 24 and 5 per cents respectively. In respect of all other groups including agricultural labour there is a decrease of real income and a fall in their standard of living.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Exchange

The District Employment Exchange at Suri with jurisdiction over the whole district started functioning on and from 17 May 1962. Prior to that date, the district was served by the sub-regional Employment Exchange at Asansol. The following table (valid for 1968) gives figures of registrations, placements, vacancies notified, live-register at the close of the year and the average number of employers using the Exchange per month.[1]

Performance of the Employment Exchange at Suri during 1968

Year	No. of registrations	No. of placements	Vacancies notified	Live-register at the end of December 1968	Monthly average No. of employers using the Exchange
1968	5,854	1,928	2,051	10,506	5.7

[1] Source: Directorate of National Employment Service, West Bengal.

At present, the Exchange is experiencing shortage of veterinary assistant surgeons, lecturers in English, Chemistry, Biology, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, trained secondary school teachers, draftsmen, tracers, mechanics, while excess supply is observed amongst passed trainees from the Industrial Training Institute, unskilled workers, *bidi*-makers and diploma-holders in Engineering subjects.

To relieve congestion in crowded occupations, the Exchange keeps the registrants informed through group discussions and advises them to equip themselves for absorption in new callings. It arranges career tasks in schools, provides vocational guidance, assists in the placement of candidates in training centres and apprentices' jobs and disseminates local information on occupations, educational courses and training facilities, etc.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As part of the Five-Years Plans, the community development programme aiming at resuscitation of the socio-economic life of the rural people was first launched in this district in October 1962 with the inauguration of Sainthia and Mahammad Bazar Development Blocks. The programme now covers the entire district with 19 Blocks, the particulars of which are given in Appendices C and D.

LEARNED PROFESSIONS

Teachers

According to the information furnished by the Director of Public Instructions, West Bengal, there were a total of 7,321 teachers, including 390 females in the district in 1964-65 distributed among the various educational institutions as follows. Colleges (general, vocational and special) account for 231 persons which include 9 females: Higher Secondary, High, Junior High, Senior Basic, Primary & Junior Basic and Nursery schools 6,492 persons including 332 females; vocational schools 514 persons including 49 females and special institutions like Tols, Madrasahs, etc. 84 persons. Besides these, the Visva-Bharati University employs a good number of teachers, particulars about whom are given in the Appendix to Chapter XIII. The teachers have their respective associations to look after their interests.

Physicians

The Census of 1961 enumerated a total of 621 doctors (including 7 females) in the district, of whom allopathic physicians and surgeons numbered 205 including 4 females. The number of allopathic physicians and surgeons practising in urban areas was 75 which included all the 4 lady doctors. The rest were in rural areas. Physicians of other categories numbered 94 and unclassified ones 178 (including 2 females). The urban-rural distribution of these 272 physicians shows that they were mostly

to be found in the rural areas which claimed 216 physicians and the remaining 60 being in urban areas.

Lawyers

According to the same source, the number of persons engaged in legal profession was 157 (including 1 female), of whom legal practitioners and advisers make a total of 135 persons including the lady in the field.

Engineers

The Census of 1961, returned 288 persons (including 2 females) as architects, engineers and surveyors in this district, of whom civil engineers (including overseers) alone numbered 188. The rest were unclassified.

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

Barbers

The same source enumerated 796 persons (including 38 females) as barbers, hairdressers, beauticians and related workers in the district, of them 148 persons were in urban areas and the remaining 648 persons worked in rural areas. In the second half of 1968, their charges for a hair-cut and a shave in a saloon in urban areas of Suri were usually 50 paise and 20 paise respectively, the corresponding rates in rural areas around Suri being 31 paise and 12 paise respectively. Pavement barbers in Suri town charge 37 paise for a hair-cut and 15 paise for a shave while in the rural periphery of Suri town the rates being 25 paise and 10 paise respectively. Elsewhere in the district, the charges for the respective job vary between the minimum rates mentioned above. The daily wage of barbers employed in saloon is usually Rs. 3 or 60 per cent of their daily income. They have no association in the district.[1]

Tailors

The same source put the total number of tailors, cutters, furriers and related workers in the district at 1,215, including 72 females. Their business is either self-managed or carried on partnership basis. In the latter half of 1968, tailoring charge for a cotton shirt varied between Rs. 1.50 and Rs. 2, for a *punjabi* between Rs. 1.50 and Rs. 2.50, for a blouse between 75 paise and Rs. 1.50 and for a cotton suit usually Rs. 15. The business of the tailors is either self-managed or run on partnership basis. The monthly income of the former averages Rs. 150. There is no association of tailors in the district.[2]

Washermen

In the same source[3], 292 persons including 52 females were recorded as launderers, cleaners and pressers ,in the district. They were mostly scattered in the rural aeas which claimed as many as 208 persons. The washermen's usual charges vary

[1-3] Source: District Magistrate, Birbhum.

from 15 to 20 paise per piece and from Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per 100 articles. They have no association in the district.

Domestic servants

The number of persons engaged in the district as house-keepers, cooks, maids, etc. was 9,206 in 1961, of whom 3,135 were females. The wages of different categories of domestic servants in Sadar and Rampurhat subdivisions as obtaining in the second half of 1968 are given in the table below which will show that the cooks' wage rates were lower in Rampurhat sub-division than in Sadar subdivision.

Categories of domestic servants	(Monthly wage in Rs.) Male		Female	
	Suri	Rampurhat	Suri	Rampurhat
Servant				
(Part-time with food)	—	5	4.50	2.50
(Part-time without food)	10-15	15	6-8	15
(Full-time with food)	12-20	20	10-15	20
(Full-time without food)	50-60	50	40-45	50
Cook				
(Part-time with food)	10	4	8	2.50
(Part-time without food)	20-30	8	25	6
(Full-time with food)	30	10	15	6
(Full-time without food)	75-100	25	50-60	20

Artists, Writers, Musicians

Artists, writers, musicians and related workers numbered 155, including 4 females, in 1961, of whom musicians and allied category of workers alone were 88 including 2 females.

APPENDIX A

Consumer Price Index, Per Capita Income And Index Of Income By Occupational Groups In Sahajapur

Occupational groups	Consumer Price Index Sept. '56	Consumer Price Index Sept. '61	Per capita income: 1956 (Rs.)	1961 (at 1961 prices Rs.)	Index of per capita income	Per capita real income in 1961 (Rs.)	Index of per capita real income
Cultivators of land wholly/mainly owned	100	114.3	171.1	438.2	161.64	383.4	141.4
Cultivators of land wholly/mainly unowned	100	118.6	110.1	134.1	121.8	113.1	102.7
Agricultural labour	100	120.6	119.4	137.9	115.5	114.3	95.8
Agricultural rent receiver	100	115.7	233.2	334.3	143.4	289.1	124.0
Production other than Cultivation	100	119.9	127.9	135.7	105.1	113.2	88.5
Trade & commerce	100	119.3	123.0	267.4	211.4	224.0	177.1
Service, profession and miscellaneous	100	121.8	103.8	119.0	114.8	97.7	94.3
General (all classes)	100	117.5	159.3	226.7	142.3	193.0	121.2

APPENDIX B

PER CAPITA ANNUAL EXPENDITURE (IN RS.) ON DIFFERENT ITEMS OF CONSUMPTION BY DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN VILLAGE SAHAJAPUR, P.S. BOLPUR DURING THE PERIOD 1955-56 AND 1960-61.

Occupational groups	Year	Cereals (total)	Food including cereals (total)	Fuel	House repairs	Education	Medical	Miscellaneous	Total exp.
Cultivators of land wholly/mainly owned	1955-56	97 27	209.98	15.65	4.27	15.59	5.51	31.21	284.21
	1960-61 (actual)	130.91	264.36	15.79	4.66	14.10	14.12	57.95	370.98
	1960-61 (real)	106.04	214.24	15.33	4.05	14.10	14.12	50.26	312.10
Cultivators of land wholly/mainly unowned	1955-56	103.90	145.71	6.79	0.79	1.00	1.68	21.70	177.67
	1960-61 (actual)	121.40	172.79	9.66	2.03	0.41	2.15	22.64	209.68
	1960-61 (real)	98.12	140.34	9.39	1.77	0.41	2.15	13.08	173.26
Agricultural labour	1955-56	107.01	142.27	7.77	0.74	0.04	2.78	20.53	174.13
	1960-61 (actual)	120.09	157.59	9.42	1.21	0.05	1.07	21.75	191.09
	1960-61 (real)	96.86	128.17	9.15	1.05	0.05	1.07	10.73	157.86
Rent receiver	1955-56	92.13	194.24	13.28	3.92	1.31	11.55	38.83	263.13

	1960-61 (actual)	131.00	252.08	15.89	6.98	10.53	8.86	49.23	243.57
	1960-61 (real)	105.89	203.04	15.43	6.07	10.53	8.86	39.89	286.84
Production other than cultivation	1955-56	88.26	134.06	10.00	2.27	—	4.04	20.52	170.89
	1960-61 (actual)	105.74	144.72	10.08	2.26	0.23	3.71	18.56	179.56
	1960-61 (real)	85.54	117.88	9.68	1.97	0.23	3.71	13.46	149.30
Trade & Commerce	1955-56	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1960-61 (actual)	130.61	205.12	15.08	2.73	—	3.64	37.44	249.48
	1960-61 (real)	106.39	166.99	14.64	2.37	—	3.64	24.09	219.86
Service & Miscellaneous	1955-56	71.79	102.57	8.37	2.61	—	0.82	19.62	133.99
	1960-61 (actual)	93.95	127.09	9.32	1.44	0.37	0.50	18.08	156.80
	1960-61 (real)	75.99	103.61	9.05	1.25	0.37	0.50	90.38	130.19
Average	1955-56	93.92	157.44	10.17	2.11	4.13	4.04	24.94	202.83
	1960-61 (actual)	121.19	191.82	11.74	2.82	4.41	5.28	32.75	248.82
	1960-61 (real)	97.96	155.65	11.60	2.45	4.41	2.28	28.56	207.95

APPENDIX C

Name of subdivision	*Name of Block*	*Date of inauguration*	*Present stage*	*Area in sq. km.*	*Total population*
Sadar	Sainthia	2.10.1952	Post — State II	314.6	1,04,698
	Mahammad Bazar	"	Stage II	313.4	66,362
	Bolpur-Sriniketan	16.7.1955	Post — Stage II	333.6	1,11,950
	Labhpur	1.4.1956	Stage II	271.2	91,610
	Nanur	2.10.1956	"	309.2	98,476
	Dubrajpur	"	"	359.5	97,695
	Ilambazar	2.10.1961	Stage I	259.5	68.882
	Rajnagar	Jan. 1962	"	220.7	41,973
	Suri I	"	"	147.7	49,233
	Suri II	2.10.1962	"	145.2	56,194
	Khayrasol	"	"	273.5	77,226
Rampurhat	Nalhati I	5.10.1952	Post — Stage II	239.1	92,063
	Nalhati II	1.4.1956	Stage II	120.4	47.995
	Murarai I	1.4.1957	"	356.9 }	1,39,267
	Murarai II	"	"		
	Mayureswar I	1.4.1962	Stage I	220.2	71,812
	Mayureswar II	"	"	160.8	56,462
	Rampurhat I	2.10.1962	"	284.2	77,211
	Rampurhat II	"	"	188.2	97,049

APPENDIX D

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE UNDER DIFFERENT HEADS IN THE BLOCKS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1967-68

(in Rupees)

Name of Block	Agriculture	Irrigation	Animal Husbandry	Education and Social Education	Tribal welfare	Communication	College Industry	Panchayat	Community recreation, local sports activities
Sainthia	5,250	1,07,094	—	—	—	—	1,000	—	—
Mahammad Bazar	14,763	13,454	—	—	—	—	5,500	—	—
Bolpur-Sriniketan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Labhpur	4,000	29,760		2,500	3,891	9,000	1,000	46,742	1,666
Nanur	40,360	8,000	2,000	2,000	3,789	8,000	—	50,143	1,000
Dubrajpur	10,620	34,050	—	3,500	1,965	7,952	—	—	—
Ilambazar	33,512	75,822	—	2,500	2,946	—	13,400	1,19,238	1,000
Rajnagar	32,080	—	—	1,000	3,514	—	1,400	—	1,000
Suri I	63,346	19,465	900	1,500	4,555	2,713	—	7,000	100
Suri II	33,888	16,337	198	14,400	3,075	—	1,000	21,786	—
Khayrasol	4,184	42,125	—	1,000	—	—	800	39,585	1,000
Nalhati I	15,774	3,150	—	225	1,271	—	1,250	8,951	60
Nalhati II	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Murarai I	9,175	36,272	1,000	2,900	—	1,020	1,000	—	—
Murarai II	13,579	10,000	1,000	—	2,538	3,000	1,000	—	1,000
Mayureswar I	53,197	59,234	2,590	7,980	5,825	4,900	1,000	10,400	1,000
Mayureswar II	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rampurhat I	10,042	23,400	—	3,500	17,376	—	4,000	—	—
Rampurhat II	28,943	76,929	6,000	8,000	—	—	2,000	9,100	1,620

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTORY

It is unfortunate that all traces of the Hindu system of district administration has been lost in Bengal. Only a faint idea of the type of the administration and its pattern in Hindu times is possible from references to the public offices and officers in copper plate grants. The administrative units into which the territory was divided during the Gupta rule were Bhukti, Vishaya, Maṇḍala, Vīthi and Grāma. The officer in charge of the Bhukti was called the Upārika and under him were several Vishayas each under a Kumārāmātya who may be taken as the prototype of the present day District Officer. The Kumārāmātya, or Ayuktaka as he was sometimes designated, had a body of four advisers consisting of (i) the Nagara Śreshtin or the chief of the guild of bankers, (ii) Sārthavāha or the chief of the merchants, (iii) Prathama Kulika or the chief artisan, and (iv) Prathama Kayastha or the Secretary of the Board.[1] The existence of such a Board seems to indicate that the administration was carried out according to the wishes of the people represented in this Board. The Khalimpur copper plate[2] of Dharmapāla gives a long list of public officers but the functions of many of them are not clear. It is probable that the Advisory Board of the Gupta times was done away with and only the Prathama Kāyastha survived under the appellation of Jyeshtha Kāyastha. Still, the formality of a government by popular wish was maintained and in the land grant the king solicits the consent of the people towards making of the grant. Of the various officers mentioned in the grant, Dandapāsika, Dandika and Daṇḍaśakti appear to have been police officers while Chauroddharaṇika was either a high ranking police officer or one collecting police tax. The Dasagrāmika was an officer in charge of ten villages and the gramika was the head-man of the village. The administrative divisions, Bhukti, Vishaya, Maṇḍala and Grāma as obtained in the Gupta times were continued. The formality of popular consent in the royal grant was done away with during the reign of

[1] Damodarpur Copper plate of Kumara Gupta I, Epigraphia Indica Vol. XV, p. 130.

[2] Epigraphia Indica Vol. IV, p. 243.

Devapāla whose Monghyr Copper plate[1] does not make this solicitation.

We possess but scanty information of the administrative system of the Afghan rulers. From literary sources, it is known that the Afghan rulers posted several Kazis in different parts of the territory and these functioned as Judge, Magistrate and Police Chief all rolled into one.

Mughal Administration

The Mughal administration in Bengal had never taken a firm root. Bengal was not fully subjugated till the reign of Jehangir. The rebellion of Prince Khurram during the latter part of the reign of Jehangir and the fratricidal war when Shahjehan was on his death-bed threw the Bengal administration into confusion and the powerful zemindars of Bengal wielded the real administrative powers. The police administration remained under these zemindars who also dispensed summary justice in Civil and Criminal cases. The Mughal Faujdar was essentially a military officer though he functioned as deputy governor and lent his forces for the collection of revenue if necessity arose. There were two kinds of police during the Mughal days. The zemindar had his own police appointed and paid by him while the Faujdar had a State police organisation. There were thanas at each Pergana head quarters under thanadars supervised by sikdars.

The jurisprudence followed was the Quranic laws as interpreted in the Sunna and the Hadith. The criminal law administered for both Hindus and Muslims was the Islamic law. In the case of the Hindus the Civil law was their own personal law.

The criminal law administered by the Kazis, appointed by the State and posted at the Provincial and Pergana head-quarters, was the Hanafite system. The Crimes were divided into three broad categories (i) crimes against God, (ii) crimes against the State and (iii) crimes against private individuals. The first category included apostacy, adultery, drinking wine, theft, high-way robbery, and robbery with murder. Apostacy, adultery and robbery with murder were punishable with death. Theft and robbery were punishable with amputation of limbs. Offences like murder and severe bodily injury were, however, only personal offences and the next of kin of the dead man or the injured had the right of retaliation or pardon. Thus, a married woman could

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[1] Indian Antiquary Vol. XXI, pp. 254-257. While the Khalimpur Copper plate of Dharmapāla mentions 'Matam astu bhavatām' (may there be your consent to this), the Monghyr Copper plate of Devapāla merely mentions 'viditam astu bhavatām' (may this be known to you).

get her husband murdered by a paramour and then pardon the paramour and marry him.

Evolution of district administration under the East India Company

At the time of the acquisition of the Dewany by the East India Company in 1765, Birbhum district was part of a much larger unit, viz., the Birbhum zemindary with an area of 3,858 square miles which included not only the present area of Birbhum district but also the whole of Deoghar sub-division and certain other portions of the Santal Perganas District of Bihar. For four years from 1765 to 1769, the East India Company did not take any step to give an administration to the Dewany provinces. On 24 May 1769, Richard Becher, the Resident at the Durbar of the Nawab at Murshidabad, wrote to the Governor Harry Verelst about the evils of the system of collecting revenue by Aumils and suggested that officers of the Company be posted at each zemindary to supervise.[1] Verelst accepted the idea and in 1769 young officers of the Company were posted as Supravisors.

The failure of the East India Company to make satisfactory collection of revenue during the first four years of the Dewany convinced the sober sections of the Company's servants that if they were to collect the revenue successfully, they must give protection and good government to the people. Verelst wrote, "The people give us the labour of their hands, and in return we owe them our protection. Common prudence as well as the laws of society, require that those obligations are reciprocal, or the tie must soon be resolved; for the foremost security of every government is the affection of the people".[2] Verelst, therefore, attempted to give the government by the appointment of Supravisors. The instructions given to the Supravisors required them to enforce justice where the law demanded and in matters of disputes over property to try the method of arbitration. They were also required to extirpate corruption in the officials of the Mughal administration, abolish arbitrary fines and call upon the local officials to produce their credentials and remove usurpers of judicial authority. The Supravisors were very junior officers of the Company and not being trained in matters of administration they generally produced little impression. But the appointment of the Supravisors marks the beginning of the District Administration.

In 1772, after Warren Hastings became the Governor, the

[1] W. K. Firminger - Introduction to the Fifth Report (1917), pp clxxvi-vii.
[2] H. Verelst - A view of the rise, progress and present state of the English Government in Bengal, London, 1772, Appendix, p. 120.

Supravisors were designated as Collectors. A mofussil Dewany and Faujdari Adalat were created in each district. The Collector was to preside over the Dewany Adalat and the Faujdari Adalat was presided over by the Kazi of the district with two Maulavis to assist. This court exercised jurisdiction in all cases of murder, assault, frays, quarrels, adultery and breaches of the peace. The Collector was to supervise the proceedings of this court and to ensure that all necessary evidence was secured and decisions based on proper evidence received in open sittings of the court. The Collectors were further to keep a locked box in the Katchary, accessible to the public where any aggrieved person could drop a petition which received the attention of the Collector on the next Katchary day. Hastings, in creating these improvements in the district administration, was following up the views of Verelst but the Board of Directors of the East India Company in England were blind to these progressive views. To them profit making was the only purpose the Company stood for and they directed in 1773 that the Collectors (Supravisors) be forthwith withdrawn. The Collectors were accordingly withdrawn from the early part of 1774.

The Mughal government depended mainly on the zemindars for the administration of the rural areas, while the Faujdari thanadars and sikdars maintained the authority of the Mughal emperor. After 1765, the pomp and power of the Mughal emperor had vanished and the Nawab Nazim of Bengal became a puppet of the East India Company. The power and prestige of the zemindars was rudely shaken by the exacting fiscal policy of the East India Company. Hastings tried to supplant the authority of the Company in the rural administration by creating the posts of Faujdars at thirteen selected places. In January 1776, Muhammed Reza Khan, now made Naib Nazim, devised a new plan for criminal administration. The criminal courts were reconstituted and one daroga and four Naib Kazis were appointed for each district court. In re-organising the police administration, Reza Khan provided a Faujdari thana at the chief town of each district. The Faujdar under the new plan was to act as the chief police officer, responsible as before, for the maintenance of law and order including the apprehension of criminals and local investigation into offences of which he sent a report to the criminal court. A prison was attached to each Faujdari thana as well as to each criminal court. The Faujdar's establishment consisted of 34 persons of which only 20 were sepoys. With such meagre force the Faujdar could ill perfom the task entrusted to him.

Reza Khan had organised the police on erstwhile Mughal pattern. But conditions had changed. The zemindari police which acted as a powerful and potent ancillary to the Faujdari police had completely broken down in most places due to the attrition of the power of the zemindars as a result of the fiscal policy of the Company. The support that Reza Khan expected from the zemindars was not obtained and the experiment failed.

The Faujdars were abolished from 1781 and the Company's covenanted servants who had been judges of the Dewany Adalat were invested with the powers of magistrates and placed incharge of the police organisation. The Judge-Magistrate's police organisation consisted of the Nazir, a jail officer, a few clerks and between 25 to 150 barkandazes usually armed with lathis but occasionally with match-locks. A proclamation was issued directing the zemindars to co-operate with their police force. The function of the Judge-Magistrate was to apprehend the criminals and commit them to the Faujdari Adalat which continued to function under the supervision of the Naib Nazim and the Nizamat Adalat at Murshidabad.

The frequent changes and half-hearted policies show an indecision and hesitancy in the management of affairs in India by the East India Company The cause is two-fold. Firstly, a company of merchants under a Board of Directors in England became suddenly saddled with the responsibility of administering a large territory whose successful administration required fixed political aims and a definite administrative policy. The Directors being only interested in profits could not take a broad view of the administration for fear of losing the profits. Secondly, what the Company acquired by the Sanad of the Dewany was an office, not even property and far less Sovereignty. The Regulating Act of the British Parliament of 1773 did not accept the sovereignty of the Company nor did it avow the sovereignty of the British Crown. The policy of obscurity ingenuously invented by Clive still held the political thought in England and the British Parliament thought it expedient to leave the character of the Company undefined so that "the English might treat the Princes in whose name they governed as realities or non-entities, just as might be more convenient".[1] The reforms of Hastings sufferred under these two limitations and he therefore tried to improve the administration within the frame-work of the Mughal

[1] Hansard. Third series, 10th July 1833, Vol. 19. p. 508.

system and failed because the main prop of the Mughal administration, namely the zemindars had been ruined by the East India Company's fiscal policy. It remained for Cornwallis to make a complete departure from the past and forge ahead a new administration.

In the mean time, the administration of Birbhum suffered badly. Originally, a Supravisor had been posted in Birbhum. But later for reasons of economy Birbhum was administered from Murshidabad till 1787. Whatever benifits were derived by other districts from the reforms of Hastings hardly percolated to Birbhum. But the district or at least a part of it got an administration in another unofficial manner. John Cheap, the first Commercial Resident of the Company, resided at Surul, about 20 miles from Suri from about 1782. Gradually, he secured so much influence over the local people that he held an un-official court at his residence and to his justice and arbitration the people readily submitted. In such matters, the law gave him no power, but in the absence of efficient courts, public opinion had accorded jurisdiction to any influential person who chose to assume it, and the Commercial Resident's decisions were speedy, inexpensive and usually just.

John Cheap's un-official court

The administration of Birbhum from Murshidabad had failed. In 1785, the Collector of Murshidabad reported that he was unable to protect Birbhum from the ravages of armed bands of bandits and asked for force. In 1786, G. R. Foley was deputed to Birbhum with orders to support the Raja of Birbhum against the marauders. Next year, Cornwallis determined to unite Birbhum and Vishnupur into a compact district and in March 1787 a notification was issued in the Calcutta Gazette to the effect that Pye was confirmed Collector of Bishenpore in addition to Birbhum heretofore superintended by G. R. Foley. Pye left the district towards the end of 1787 and was succeeded by Sherburne who was removed towards the close of 1788 and Christopher Keating was appointed the Collector. It was Keating who ushered the Cornwallis reforms and a stable organised administration in the district.

Cornwallis and his reforms

Though the British Parliament in the Regulating Act did not accept the sovereignty of the Company or avow the sovereignty of the British Crown, many of the acts of Cornwallis would show that he assumed a sovereignty. The office of the Naib Nazim hitherto held by Muhammed Reza Khan was abolished and the Nizamat Adalat transferred to Calcutta, to be presided over by

the Governor-General and members of the Supreme Council assisted by the Chief Kazi and two Muftis to declare the law on the subject. The Islamic law was changed and many of the heinous offences which were personal offences in that law were made offences against the State. The British Common Law principle of King's peace was promulgated. Amputation of limbs sanctioned by the Islamic law was substituted by hard labour or fine and imprisonment. Under the Islamic law the evidence of non-Muslims were inadmissible as evidence in the criminal trials of Muslims. Cornwallis removed the anomaly in the law. These changes were first made by executive orders in 1790 and later embodied in Regulation IX of 1793.

The post of the darogas of the criminal courts were abolished and four criminal Courts of Circuit were created to hold two six monthly circuits in each district in a year. The Judge-Magistrates were to produce the criminal before the Circuit Courts which tried the cases and after determining the case sent the records to the Nizamat Adalat in Calcutta for pronouncement of the sentence. The British born subjects were, however, not amenable to the jurisdiction of this Court. They were triable only by the Supreme Court.

The police reforms of Cornwallis, firstly, did away with the Zemindari police organisation, and secondly, it divided the districts into compact areas of about 20 to 30 square miles and established a thana in each such area with a daroga, a muharrir, a jamadar and ten barkandazes all in Government's pay. These thanas were under the direct supervision of the Judge-Magistrate of the district. The village chaukidar though still appointed by the zemindar was made subject to the order of the darogas.[1]

The Civil and Revenue suits jurisdiction of the Collector was taken away and vested in the Zilla Judge.[2] The Collector, however, continued to try petty criminal cases punishable with corporal punishment of thirty rattans or imprisonment up to thirty days.[3]

Cornwallis laid the foundation of the British system of administration in India. The system introduced by him gradually developed into the elaborate system of district administration by about 1870. This is the system which is still followed except for

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[1] Regulation XXII of 1793.
[2] Regulation II of 1793.
[3] Regulation IX of 1793.

minor changes. The developments since the time of Cornwallis may be briefly noted.

Criminal trials

The four Courts of Circuit could not dispose of the cases with sufficient expedition and prisoners languished in jails without trial for more than a year. The Board of Revenue was also finding it difficult to dispose of all matters concerning revenue referred from the districts. Accordingly, in 1829, the posts of Commissioners of Revenue and Circuit[1] were created and the powers and functions of the Court of Circuit were delegated to these Commissioners. But as Revenue work began to suffer, the powers and functions of the Circuit Courts were made over to the Zilla Judge in 1831.[2] This is the beginning of the office of the Sessions Judge. In the mean time, considerations of expedition of trial in criminal cases led to the increase in the powers of the Magistrates and those who were covenanted servants of the Company were authorised to try offences of burglary, theft, receiving stolen property, and escaping from custody and were empowered to inflict punishment of imprisonment up to two years and thirty rattans as corporal punishment.[3] European Assistant Magistrates were empowered to try some of the cases and inflict punishment up to six months' imprisonment and corporal punishment up to thirty rattans.[4] Indians had been appointed Deputy Collectors mainly for revenue work.[5] These Indian Deputy Collectors were empowered to try petty cases and inflict sentences up to one month's imprisonment and thirty rattans as corporal punishment. The Collectors had remained divested of judicial powers since the time of Cornwallis. Judicial criminal powers were restored to them by Dalhousie in 1854.[6] Thus emerged the District Magistrate and Collector who in later years became the pivot of the district administration.

Though the superintendence of the police was vested in the Judge-Magistrates, a Superintendent of Police for Calcutta, Dacca and Murshidabad divisions was appointed in 1808.[7] This office was abolished when the Commissioners of Revenue were given powers of the superintendence of the Police. A separate

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1 Regulation I of 1829.
2 Regulation VII of 1831.
3 Regulation XII of 1818 and Regulation VIII of 1830
4 Regulation III of 1821 and Regulation IV of 1822.
5 Regulation IX of 1833.
6 Despatch by Dalhousie dated 24th April 1854.
7 Regulation X of 1808.

Superintendent of Police for each district was appointed in 1861 on the recommendation of the Police Commission in 1860.

The present district set up

The general administration of the district is in charge of the District Magistrate and Collector who is under the administrative control of the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division whose Head Quarters is at Chinsurah. Subject to the control and supervision of the District Magistrate, the general administration of the only outlying sub-division of the district, Rampurhat, is in charge of the Sub-Divisional Officer. The Head Quarters of the district is at Suri where the District Magistrate and Collector is stationed. The District Magistrate and Collector, who belongs to the Indian Administrative Service, is assisted by an Additional District Magistrate who is in charge of the Estates Acquisition and Revenue branches of the office of the Collector and is also in charge of the excise department. There is a Superintendent of Excise in direct charge of the Excise Administration. There are three Deputy Magistrates and Deputy Collectors at the Sadar station of whom one is the Sadar Sub Divisional Officer, one is the Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad and the third is the District Panchayat Officer and Special Officer, Planning and Development. Another Deputy Collector is posted at Bolpur as Additional Sub Divisional Officer with effect from 6 December 1971. Of the five Sub Deputy Magistrates and Sub Deputy Collectors one is Special Officer for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare, another is Special Land Acquisition Officer and the remaining three work as Magistrates and perform other miscellaneous work. There are six Temporary Sub Deputy Collectors of whom one is stationed at Bolpur as Administrator of the Bolpur Municipality; one is the District Compensation Officer and another is Additional Land Acquisition Officer. The remaining three perform miscellaneous duties of the District Office. At Rampurhat, there are two Deputy Magistrates and Deputy Collectors of whom one is in charge of the sub division and the other assists him in case work. There is a Munsif-Magistrate. There is one Sub Deputy Magistrate and Sub Deputy Collector for criminal case work and a Temporary Sub Deputy Collector for miscellaneous work. The police administration in the district is under a Superintendent of Police stationed at Suri belonging to the Indian Police Service cadre. He is assisted by one Additional Superintendent of Police and two Deputy Superintendents of Police. One of the Deputy Superintendents is in charge of discipline and training and the other is in charge of the Head quarters office and generally assists the

Superintendent in the administration. At Rampurhat, there is one Deputy Superintendent of Police as the Sub Divisional Police Officer. He is under the Superintendent of Police.

Community Development Blocks

There are nineteen Community Development Blocks* in the district each under a Block Development Officer. These officers usually belong to the cadre of Sub Deputy Collectors though quite a number of officers of the Subordinate Agricultural Service, Class I have been appointed to these posts. Each Block has its complement of Extension Officers of whom the Agricultural Extension Officer, the Inspector of Co-operation Societies, the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon are Gazetted Officers while the Industries Extension Officer, the Extension Officer for Panchayats, the Social Education Officer and the Lady Social Education Officer, the Fishery Extension Officer, the Sub Assistant Engineer and the Assistant Agricultural Extension Officers are non-Gazetted. Generally, each block has two Gram Sevikas, though some have one.

Estates Acquisition and Land Reforms

The Estates Acquistion and Land Reforms organisation under the Collector has two Sub Divisional Land Reforms Officers, one posted at Suri and the other posted at Rampurhat. Besides, there are fourteen Junior Land Reforms Officers and fourteen Circle Inspectors, one each for each thana in the district.

Compensation

There is one District Compensation Officer and two Sub Divisional Compensation Officers, one for the Sadar Sub Division posted at Suri and the other for the Rampurhat Sub Division posted at Rampurhat. There are also two Assistant Compensation Officers.

Other Departments

Agriculture

The Principal Agricultural Officer stationed at Suri looks after agricultural development works in the district. He is technically assisted by 1 District Agronomist (crops), 1 District Agronomist (seeds & fertilisers), 1 District Plant Protection Officer, 1 District Training Officer, 1 Subject Matter Specialist, 6 Officers in the Subordinate Agricultural Service (Class I) and 4 Farm Managers. Besides, he has under him an Assistant Farm Manager, 16 persons in the Subordinate Agricultural Service (class III) and 4 Sub Assistant Engineers and Surveyors.

Agricultural Engineering

The Assistant Engineer (Agri.-Irrigation) at Suri is responsible for the implementation of deep tubewell irrigation schemes. He has under him 2 Sub Assistant Engineers, 2 Surveyors, 2 Electricians, 1 Mechanic and 3 Work Assistants.

* For a list of the Community Development Blocks and their headquarters please see Appendix at the end of this Chapter.

The Assistant Engineer (Agri.-Mechanical) at Suri looks after the installation and maintenance of engines and pumps and upkeep of thana farm machinery. He has under him 1 Sub Assistant Engineer, 1 Surveyor, 1 L.R.O.CM and 1 Deputed OCM.

Agricultural Marketing

The District Agricultural Marketing Officer stationed at Suri looks after the agricultural marketing matters in general. As a member in different tender committees, he has to advise about the market price of agricultural commodities for purchase and disposal by the government. He has also to function as a Director of different cooperative marketing societies and to supervise the six cold storages and to prepare the marketing survey reports as outlined by the State and Central Governments on different commodities. He has under him 2 Subdivisional Agricultural Marketing Officers and 7 Market Reporters.

Agricultural Income Tax

For the purpose of the Bengal Agricultural Income Tax Act, 1944, there is no establishment exclusively for the district of Birbhum, which is within the jurisdiction of the Burdwan Range, the Agricultural Income Tax Office being located at Burdwan Town.

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary

The District Veterinary Officer stationed at Suri is in charge of the animal husbandry and veterinary administration in the district. The Veterinary Inspector under him is the officer-in-charge of the State Veterinary Hospital at Suri and the District Veterinary Pathologist is also attached to the State Veterinary Hospital at Suri. Besides, there are 15 Stationary Veterinary Assistant Surgeons.

The District Livestock Officer at Suri is responsible for livestock administration in the district He has under him 2 Assistant Livestock Officers, one at Suri and the other at Bolpur. Besides, there are 1 Extension Officer and 12 Stockmen.

Cottage and Small Scale Industries

The District Industrial Officer stationed at Suri looks after the developmental activities of Cottage and Small-scale Industries. He has also to maintain liaison with other Government and non-Government institutions. He has under him a Superintendent to supervise the Model Blacksmithy Workshop. An Extension Officer assists the District Industrial Officer in the implementation of the community development programmes including industrial cooperatives. There are also 5 Instructors to impart training in the Training Centre.

The Industrial Training Institute at Suri is headed by a Principal, who has under him 2 Foremen, 42 Instructors and 6 Workshop Attendants.

The Assistant Controller of Weights and Measures at Suri is responsible for the implementation of the West Bengal Standards of Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act of 1958 and the Rules made thereunder in 1959. He has under him 1 Inspector of Weights and Measures.

Weights & Measures

The Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies posted at Suri and assisted by 1 District Auditor of Cooperative Societies, 1 Co-operative Development Officer, 30 Inspectors and 30 Auditors heads the cooperative administration of the district.

Co-operation

The District Inspector of Schools stationed at Suri exercises general supervision over all types of schools. He has under him 4 Assistant Inspectors of Schools, 1 Senior Technical Assistant, 8 Deputy Assistant Inspectors of Schools, 8 Sub Inspectors of Schools, 1 Principal and 6 Lecturers attached to Shyampahari Government Junior Basic Training College.

Education

The District Officer for Physical Education and Youth Welfare at Suri is responsible for planning, organizing and supervising physical education, sports and games in all grades of educational institutions, youth clubs and associations. He has under him 1 District Organiser.

The District Commercial Tax organization is managed by 1 Commercial Tax Officer, Grade I, 1 Commercial Tax Officer, Grade II and 1 Inspector of Commercial Taxes all stationed at Suri. This organization is responsible for administration and collection of taxes under Bengal Financial (Sales Tax) Act, Bengal Motor Spirits Sales Tax Act, Bengal Raw Jute Taxation Act — all of 1941, West Bengal Sales Tax Act of 1954 and Central Sales Tax Act of 1956.

Commercial Tax

The District Controller of Food and Supplies at Suri is in charge of the food and supplies organization. He is assisted in his varied duties by an Assistant District Controller, 1 Chief Inspector, 1 Auditor, 10 Inspectors and 8 Sub Inspectors.

Food & Supplies

The District Fishery Officer at Suri is responsible for implementing all schemes of his department in the district. He has under him 1 Assistant Farm Manager and 1 Assistant Fishery Officer.

Fisheries

The Divisional Forest Officer is in charge of Birbhum Forest Division with head-quarters at Suri. He has under him 6 Forest Rangers and 20 Foresters.

Forest

The Assistant Engineer, Rural Water Supply, Suri looks after the execution of the schemes of water supply in the rural areas. He is assisted in his technical works by 14 technical persons.

Rural Water Supply

Information and Public Relations

The District Information and Public Relations Officer at Suri is in charge of information and public relations works. He has under him 1 Sub divisional Information and Public Relations Officer for the Sadar Subdivision and one for Rampurhat subdivision.

Irrigation

The Superintending Engineer at Suri is the Controlling Officer of the Mayurakshi River Project. He heads the Circle Office which consists of 1 Technical Assistant, 1 Head Estimator, 2 Estimators, 1 Draftsman, 1 Tracer, 1 Kanungo and 1 Amin.

The Mayurakshi South Canals Division is headed by an Execu-Engineer, who is assisted by 5 Assistant Engineers, 21 Sub Assistant Engineers, 2 Draftsmen, 2 Tracers and 1 Divisional Accountant.

The Mayurakshi South Canals Division is headed by an Executive Engineer who has for his jurisdiction parts of the districts of Birbhum, Burdwan and Murshidabad. He has under him 2 Assistant Engineers (Gazetted) and 2 non-Gazetted Subdivisional Officers, 21 Sub Assistant Engineers, 3 Surveyors, 15 Work Assistants, 2 Draftsmen and 2 Tracers.

National Employment Service

The Assistant Employment Officer looks after the administration of the Employment Exchange at Suri under the directorate of National Employment Service. He supervises the registration and placement of the unemployed persons, who report to the exchange for employment assistance. He also imparts vocational guidance to the candidates and disseminates job information to them. He also sees that the Compulsory Notification of Vacancies Act is properly enforced and contacts the employers for vacancies.

Survey and Settlement

The Charge Officer looks after the settlement and survey work under the provision of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act. Since the introduction of the Act, he has been engaged for the preparation and publication of Compensation Assessment Rolls for payment of compensation to the ex-intermediaries. This organization has, moreover, 8 Special Revenue Officers who generally look after the preparation of Records of Rights, Compensation Assessment Rolls and also hear the objection cases.

Registration

There are two Sub-Registry Offices at Suri and eight Sub-Registry Offices in the outlying areas. The offices at Suri exercise jurisdiction over the police stations of Suri, Rajnagar, Mahammad Bazar and Sainthia. Dubrajpur Sub-Registry Office is located at Dubrajpur and has jurisdiction over the police stations of Dubrajpur and Khayrasol. Bolpur Sub Registry Office has jurisdiction over the police stations of Bolpur, Labhpur, Ilambazar

and Nanur. Nanur Sub-Registry Office has jurisdiction over the police stations of Labhpur, Nanur, Bolpur and Ilambazar. Rampurhat Sub-Registry Office has jurisdiction over the police stations of Rampurhat and Mayureswar. Mollarpur Sub-Registry Office at Mollarpur has jurisdiction over the police stations of Rampurhat and Mayureswar. Nalhati Sub-Registry Office at Nalhati has jurisdiction over the police stations of Nalhati and Murarai. Murarai Sub-Registry office is at Murarai and has jurisdiction over the police stations of Nalhati and Murarai.

The volume of business transacted by all these Sub Registry Offices taken together for the year 1969-70 appears in the table below:

REGISTRATIONS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1969-70

Gift	—	5,595
Sale		66,430
Mortgage	—	6,667
Lease	—	470
Will	—	66
Others	—	5,069
Total Receipts	— Rs.	7,47,992
Total expenditure	— Rs.	3,79,069

B. T. ACT

Transactions	—	89,562
Total receipts	— Rs.	72,688
Total expenditure	— Rs.	13,111

The Public Works Department set-up

The Public Works (Maintenance) administration in Birbhum is headed by an Executive Engineer, who is assisted by 3 Assistant Engineers, 11 Sub Assistant Engineers, 2 Draftsmen and 2 Tracers.

The Public Works (Roads) administration is headed by 2 Assistant Engineers, one of them being posted at Suri and the other at Rampurhat. The Assistant Engineer, Suri, has under him 4 Sub Assistant Engineers, 1 Mechanic and 1 Assistant Mechanic.

The Assistant Engineer, Rampurhat, has under him 1 Work-charged Assistant Engineer and 1 Work-charged Sub Assistant Engineer.

The Construction Board under the Public Works Department has an Assistant Engineer, who is assisted by 3 Sub Assistant Engineers.

The Suri Electrical Section under the Western Electrical Division of the Public Works Department consists of 1 Sub Assistant Engineer, 1 Head Wireman and 1 Senior Wireman.

Tourism

There is a Manager to look after the Tourist Lodge at Santiniketan. He has under him 2 Receptionists.

Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics

The Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, responsible for crop survey, socio-economic survey, etc., has an Assistant Superintendent to look after its administration in the district along with the Ausgram Police Station of the district of Burdwan and the Khargram Police station of the district of Murshidabad. He is assisted by 1 Supervisor and 4 Inspectors.

Fire Services

There is a Station Officer assisted by 2 Sub Officers, 7 Fire Engine Operators, 7 Leaders and 29 Firemen.

Central Government set up

Income Tax

The Income Tax Officer at Suri is empowered to act both as tax imposing and tax collecting authority in respect of all assessees within the district. The Income Tax Officer is assisted by 3 Inspectors.

Postal

The Birbhum Postal Division extends over the district of Birbhum along with parts of the districts of Murshidabad and Burdwan. A Superintendent of Post Offices heads this division and is assisted by 1 Higher Selection Grade Postmaster.

National Savings

There is 1 District Organiser to organise the National Savings in the district. He is assisted by a number of part time Agents appointed by the district authorities.

Customs & Central Excise

For the collection of minor excise duties, there is 1 Superintendent, Central Excise for the Birbhum district and he has under him 4 Inspectors and 1 Sub Inspector.

ORGANIZATIONS UNDER STATUTORY BODIES

Food Corporation of India

The District Manager heads this organization for the district of Birbhum. He is assisted by 1 Joint District Manager, 5 Assistant Managers, 7 Chief Inspectors, 49 Inspectors, 19 Sub Inspectors. He has also under him 182 other employees of different categories.

State Electricity Board

For the supervision of operation and maintenance of transmission and distribution system, the Board has a Divisional Engineer for the district. He is assisted by 5 Assistant Engineers.

The Board has an Assistant Engineer at Suri to look after the rural electrification works.

Life Insurance Corporation

The Suri Branch of the Life Insurance Corporation of India is headed by a Branch Manager being assisted by 2 Assistant Branch Managers, one for administration and the other for development.

APPENDIX

Community Development Blocks and Block Head-quarters

Name of the Block	*Block Head-quarters*
1. Bolpur	Sriniketan
2. Dubrajpur	Dubrajpur
3. Ilambazar	Ilambazar
4. Khayrasol	Churor
5. Labhpur	Labhpur
6. Mahammad Bazar	Patelnagar
7. Mayureswar I	Mollarpur
8. Mayureswar II	Kotasur
9. Murarai I	Murarai
10. Murarai II	Paikor
11. Nanur	Nanur
12. Nalhati I	Nalhati
13. Nalhati II	Lohapur
14. Rampurhat I	Rampurhat
15. Rampurhat II	Rampurhat
16. Rajnagar	Rajnagar
17. Sainthia	Ahmadpur
18. Suri I	Suri
19. Suri II	Purandarpur

CHAPTER X

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

History of Land Revenue assessment and Management

The Sanskrit word for land revenue is *rājasva* or "that which is due to the king". The Sanskrit word more precisely describes the real nature of land revenue in India than the English terms land-revenue, land-tax, quit rent, etc. Land revenue in ancient India was a share of the produce of the land due to the king for his maintenance in lieu of which the king was enjoined to look to the welfare, happiness and protection of the people from aggression. Land revenue was thus a *vali* due to the king. In the *Rigveda* king Nahusha is said to have realised this *vali* from the villages.[1] The use of the term *vali* seems to indicate that the king had no absolute property right in the lands which vested in the village commune. In the *Kurudhamma Jātaka*[2] a man taking a handful of paddy ears from a field remorsefully remarks that he had to give a share of it to the king. Thus by the 6th century B.C. the right of the king to a share of the crop was already an established practice. The word *vali* is used in the same sense in the Rummindei Pillar Edict of Asoka when he decreed that the village of Lumbini was made free of revenue.[3]

The ancient law givers Manu,[4] and Kautilya in the *Arthasastra*[5] and the *Mahābhārata* lay down the rule that the revenue is to be realised little by little and as far as the economy would bear. In the pharaseology of the *Mahābhārata* the state must not be overmilked.[6] According to *Sukra-Niti* land revenue is to be collected just as a garlandmaker collects the flowers from the trees (taking care not to injure them) and not in the manner of the charcoal maker who burns the forest to get his charcoal.[7]

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1 *Rigveda*, VII. 6-5

2 Fausboll Jataka No 276: *Imam hā kedārā mayā rañño bhāgo dātawo adinnabhāgato yeva cha me kedārato sālisishamushti gāhāpito* "This is the paddy field of which a share has to be given by me to the King; from the (still) unshared field a handful of ears of paddy is taken by me".

3 Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptions Indicarum*, Vol. I, pp. 169 ff.

4 Manu, Chapter VII, Verse 129.

5 Kautilya's *Arthasastra*—Shamasastri's edition, Book V, Ch. II.

6 Santi lxxvii, 20-22. It will be shown later how this early British Administration had over-milked Bengal.

7 iv, ii, 35-36. The land-revenue policy of the early British Administrators was similar to the action of the charcoal-maker, because within 20 years of the Permanent Settlement the entire landed aristocrasy of Bengal was ruined and deprived of their Zemindaries by Revenue-sales with the sole exception of the Maharaja of Burdwan.

Such were the Hindu tenets for the assessment and realisation of land revenue. We do not know the exact manner in which land revenue was assessed and collected in Birbhum before the Afghan conquest in the middle of the 13th century A.D. But from several copper plate land records of the Gupta period (which will be discussed later) it appears that in Bengal the village commune ownership of the lands continued. The institution of *grāmika* or a warden of the village mentioned in Manu also find mention in these plates; there were also a class of officer known as *pustapāla* who maintained the village records (cf. *patwari* of later days); there were also the *kutumbins* or village headmen without whose permission no land could be sold. Not much information is available about the revenue system of Bengal during the reign of the Afghan rulers. But considering the fact that the Governors and independant Afghan rulers of Lakhnauti were very much affluent, it would not be unreasonable to presume that the collection of land revenue continued to be satisfactory. This leads to the other presumption that the Afghan rulers had the wisdom to leave the old Hindu system of assessment and collection undisturbed. The only change they made was to create certain military *jaigirs* for the purpose of governance of the country and proper realisation of the revenues from the Bishayis and Māndaliks. Sikander Shah (A.D. 1358 to 1367) is said to have made a revenue settlement but the details are lost. There is a tradition that Sher Shah caused a measurement of the lands in Bengal and fixed ¼th of the estimated produce of the lands as Government's revenue. The details of the arrangement by which this share of the Government was realised is not known. Anyway, we have no record of there being any Muquiddim or Aumil appointed by Sher Shah in Bengal as he did in his *jaigir* in Bihar. Most likely, the alleged measurement was not a measurement of the land but a computation of the measurement from the village records and an assessment based on such records of the realisable dues of the Government.

After the defeat of Daud Khan Karrani, Akbar appointed Raja Todarmull to make a revenue survey of Bengal. An account of this revenue survey on Akbar's principles is contained in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. It is generally believed that Todarmull's revenue settlement was a detailed and actual field survey of Bengal, but considering the time during which Todarmull was in Bengal it would be impossible to survey 90,000 sq. miles and fix the

rent or revenue on such survey. The scheme said to have been followed by Todarmull between A.D. 1582 and A.D. 1587 was to measure each field by a standard measuring rope and add up such measurement for the entire Pargana. Next, the classifications of lands were made dependent upon the quality of soil and the crops produced. As, in Bengal, the accepted practice of the tenants was to pay rent or revenue in cash which Akbar allowed, Todarmull is said to have collected the current price of staple crops for 19 years and computed an average. On the basis of the measurement of the lands and assessment of its productivity and on the average price of staple crops produced, a *tukseem jumma* was drawn up Pargana by Pargana and these *tukseem jummas* were added up to compute the *Asl Toomary Jumma* of the province as follows:

Mughal Revenue system

682 Parganas comprising 19 circars —	*Khalsa*	Rs.	63,44,260
	Jaigir	Rs.	43,48,892
	Total	Rs.	1,06,93,152

Doubts have been expressed that the so-called *Asl Toomary Jumma* cf Todarmull was not an actual statement of facts and computation based on measurement but a tentative figure of what the land revenue of Bengal would be according to the principles enunciated by Akbar. For, it is significant that while the *Ain-I-Akbari* gives figures for measurement of other subahs, no figure of measurement is given of the subah of Bengal. Moreover, it is a fact of history that the area around Chittagong did not come under the Mughal sway till long after Todarmull's survey but the *Ain-I-Akbari* gives a revenue of Chittagong as well. Akbar's plan as given in the *Ain-I-Akbari* reveals an appointment of Aumil and over them of Amil-Guzars for the realisation of the said revenues. The fact, however, is that no such officers are known in Bengal. In fact, this could not be, because in Bengal there were certainly big zamindars or local rajas who were responsible for the collection from the tenants. The account given in the *Ain-I-Akbari* does not mention a single such raja. It was probably on these considerations that Sir John Shore in his minute dated 18 June 1789 mentioned, "Turymull (Todarmull—Ed.) is supposed to have fixed the rent payable by the ryots, but by what rules he settled it we are not certainly

informed. The Assul Jumma established by him does not anywhere exist."[1]

Even though there are doubts about the authenticity of the revenue settlement of Todarmull, it appears that his figures were followed as the basis of revisions in subsequent assessment during the Mughal rule. The first such revised assessment was made during the Vice-Regency of Prince Sujah in A.D. 1658 as under:

	Rs.
Assil Jumma Toomary (Todarmull)	63,44,260
Ezafa or increase in the *hastabood* or in the valuation of ancient or actual revenue being the improved rental of the same extent of country in a period of 76 years: 1582 to 1658	9,87,162
Annexation of new dominion or sources of revenue either Mahal or Sayer	14,35,500
	87,67,015
Jaigir	43,48,892
Total —	1,31,15,907

Akbar's revenue system implemented in Todarmull's revenue survey of A.D. 1582 envisaged that there would be revisional settlement at decennial periods and the Asl Toomary Jamma continuously corrected on the basis of revisional surveys. But so far as Bengal subah is concerned, it does not appear that any revisional survey was made after Todarmull and before the British Government started survey and settlement operations. For, if there had been revisional surveys, the revised assessment of Prince Sujah as stated above would have corrected the original Asl Toomary Jamma of Todarmull on the basis of surveys. But Prince Sujah's revision was merely an addition to the Asl Toomary Jamma by improving the rental on existing *hastabood* for the same territory. Annexation of new dominion and sources, however, were perhaps separately surveyed and the demand computed as shown above.

[1] Para 218 of the minute—5th Report on East India Affairs 1812. Reprinted Firminger Edition, 1917. p. 53.

Thus, even during the reign of Shahjahan when the Grand Mughal Administration was at the zenith of its power, no revisional survey was conducted. The next change in the assessment was in A.D. 1722 after the death of Aurangzeb when the grand fabric of the Mughal Administration had began to crumble down. Jaffar Khan introduced the first *subahdari abwab* called *khas nabisi*. All the zamindars were put into prison by Jaffar Khan and he divided the entire Bengal subah into 19 chaklas or units of fiscal divisions. He appointed *aumils* to collect rent direct from the tenants. The total Toomary Jamma of Prince Sujah was enhanced on the basis of direct collection *hastaboods* to Rs. 1,42,38,186 From this period to A.D. 1763, when Kassem Ali (Mir Kasim) was made the figure-head Nawab by the British, the Jumma continued to be recklessly increased by addition of *subahdari abwabs* which were as many as 12 in number. The total amount of *abwab* added to the assessment of Prince Sujah was Rs 1,17,91,853[1] as detailed below:

			Rs.
First.	- Period, in Jaffer Khan's government to 1726; viz (1st) Woojoohat Khasnoveessy, the only additional impost ..		2,58,857
Second. --	in Sujah Khan to 1739, four additional articles:		
	(2nd) Nuzzeranath Mokurrery, amounting to rupees ..	6,48,040	
	(3rd) Jer Mat hoot ..	1,52,786	
	(4th) Mat hoot Feel Khaneh ..	3,22,631	
	(5th) Foiedarry Abwab ..	7,90,638	
			19,14,095
Third.	— in Aliverdi Khan's to 1755, three more:		
	(6th) Chout Marhatta, amounting to ..	15,31,817	
	(7th) Ahuk and Khest Gour ..	1,92,140	
	(8th) Nuzzeranath Munsoorgunge ..	5,01,597	
			22,25,554

[1] From Analysis of J. Grant, Sheristadar—*vide* Firminger, Fifth Report.

		Rs.
Fourth, — in Cossim Ali Khan's to 1763, the four ultimate imposts:		
(9th) Keffyet Hustabood, amounting to	.. 14,72,599	
(10th) Serf Sicca, 1½ anna	.. 4,53,488	
(11th) Keffyet Foujedaran	.. 36,74,239	
(12th) Towfeer Jageerdaran	.. 18,81,014	
		74,81,340
TOTAL amount of viceroyal assessments, on Mhal and Sayer of the Khalsa and Jageer Lands of the soubah of Bengal, established proportionately to the original rent roll of Jaffer Khan, in our soubahdarry administrations, from the Fussillee year 1128 to 1170 inclusive, or the 11th April 1763 of the Christian era.		1,18,79,846
Minha, or deduction of the amount passed to the account of Tipperah in the time of Sujah Khan, under the head of Foujedarry Abwab, when so much of the Jumma Toomary, as had been struck out of the Bundobust in consequence of the acquired independence of the Zemindar after the death of Jaffer Khan, was again restored to the soubah, though retained as a private perquisite of office by the Foujedar previously	..	87,993
Teshkhees or Net Jumma Aboab	..	1,17,91,853

The progressive increase of the total *jumma* of Bengal subah from the time of Todarmull to A.D. 1763 would appear from the following table.

PROGRESSIVE ACCOUNT OF THE SETTLEMENT[1] OF BENGAL FROM A.D. 1582 TO 1763

Turymull's Settlement, 1582:		Rs.	Rs.
Khalsa Lands	..	63,44,260	
Jagheer or assigned lands	..	43,48,892	
Total Assignment	..		1,06,93,152

[1] From the Appendix to the Minute of Sir John Shore: *loc. cit.*

		Rs.	Rs.
Sultan Sujah's Settlement in A.D. 1658:			
Khalsa Lands, as above	..	63,44,260	
Increase on a hustabood in 76 years	..	9,87,162	
Annexations territory	..	14,35,593	
		87,67,015	
Jagheer or assigned lands	..	43,48,892	
Total Assignment		..	1,31,15,907
Jaffer Khan's Settlement in A.D. 1722:			
Khalsa lands, as above, according to Sujah's settlement	..	87,67,015	
Increase in 64 years	..	11,72,279	
Resumed lands from the Jagheer appropriations	..	10,21,415	
Total Khalsa	..	1,09,60,709	
Jagheer or assigned lands	..	33,27,477	
Total Assessment		..	1,42,88,186
Sujah Khan's Settlement in 1135 B.S. or A.D. 1728:			
Khas lands	.	1,09,18,084	
Jagheer or assigned lands		33,27,477	
Total Assessment		..	1,42,45,561
Kossim Ali Khan's Settlement in A.D. 1763:			
Jumma, as above, according to Sujah Khan's assessment	..	1,42,45,561	
Deduct: Dismembered territory, Muzkooraut, Dacca, Jagheer and Sebundy charges	..	4,13,191	
		1,38,32,370	
Add: Taxes progressively imposed from the year 1722 to the year 1763	..	1,17,91,853	
Total Assessment		..	2,56,24,223

Emperor Akbar, who introduced the Mughal revenue system in Bengal, had the wisdom to realise that where the revenue is to be collected from millions of individual cultivators there must be a system and that system must not be something which is entirely different from what the tenants are used to. Accordingly, Todarmull's revenue survey and settlement in general followed the Hindu pattern of assessing ¼ of the gross produce as the king's share converted into a cash rent based upon average prices of commodities for 19 years. Emperor Akbar's scheme made no provision for increase of the total demand by imposition of arbitrary *abwabs* without a proper re-valuation of the quantity of land cultivated, the crops produced and their value and increase in total cultivated area. Prince Sujah Khan's increase of assessment was merely on the re-valuation of increases in cultivation which apparently was obtained by some sort of survey. From the time of Jaffer Khan started the imposition of pernicious *abwabs* which increased the total rate of payment by the cultivators, for obviously the zemindars passed the increased demands on to the ryots and in all likelihood at a higher rate. The percentage increases in the total revenue demand was 9.2 in 76 years in the assessment of Sultan Sujah, 8.5 in 64 years in the assessment of Jaffer Khan, 15.6 in the assessment of Aliverdi Khan in 28 years and 55.6 in the assessment of Kashem Ali in 7 years. The assessment of Kashem Ali started off the famous controversy between Sir John Shore and James Grant. We need not enter into the details of that controversy but may state briefly that Grant was of opinion that the assessment of Kashem Ali was fair and the land could bear it and even more, while Sir John Shore was definitely of the opinion that the same assessment was rack-renting and economy of the country would never bear it.[1]

In order to pay his debts to the East India Company Nawab Kashem Ali Khan ceded the revenues of the three districts to the East India Company, the remainder, therefore, became the *dewani* lands of Bengal which the Company were to administer as *dewan* since 1765. The proportionate assessment of the *dewani* lands according to the *Jumma* of Kashem Ali was Rs. 2,41,18,912. The following table taken from Shore's minutes dated 18 June

[1] Inspite of vehement opposition by Sir John Shore, the views of J. Grant found favour with the East India Company—and formed the basis of the assessment at the Permanent Settlement.

1789 would show the collection position and arrears of the assessment of Kashem Ali.

STATEMENT		Gross Settlement	Collection	Balance
B. Years		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1169. A.D.	1762-3 Cossim Ali	2,41,18,912	64,56,198	1,76,62,713
1170	1763-4 Nundcoomar	1,77,01,766	76,18,407	1,00,86,358
1171 ..	1764-5 "	1,70,97,678	18,75,535	95,22,144
1172	1765-6 Mahd. Reza Khan	1,60,29,011	1,47,04,875	13,24,135

The last entry in the above table refers to the collection made by the East India Company through the *naib dewan* Md. Reza Khan. It would appear that the actual collections fell far short of Cossim Ali's assessment. The table in Appendix A, taken from Shore's minutes, would show that during a period of three years the total reduction which had to be allowed on the *jumma* was to the tune of Rs 80.9 lakhs.

In the meantime, the East India Company had run severely into debts and needed money to pay off the debts. The Directors, therefore, clamoured for greater collection. Whispers went around that both Nundcoomar and Mahomed Reza Khan have made secret personal profits which caused the shortfall in the collection. Mahomed Reza Khan was put on trial but was honourably acquitted.

During the time of management of Mahomed Reza Khan, European officers under the designation of Supravisor were appointed to the districts and they were enjoined to make enquiries about the revenue not earlier than Sujah Khan. But the step next taken made the appointment of Supravisors superfluous. Contrary to the advice of Mahomed Reza Khan, settlements were made by local auction to the highest bidder for a term of five years. The purpose of this procedure was to ascertain by this manner the maximum capacity of the country for revenue and it was considered that the "natives" coming up to bid would possess better knowledge of the real assets of particular estates than what the Company's officers would find out. This may be said to be the most insane project that the British had ever tried in India. The opinion of Mill is quoted on the result of this project.

"At an early period, under the five years' settlement (of 1772),

it was perceived, that the farmers of the revenue had contracted for more than they were able to pay. The collections fell short of the engagements even for the first year; and the farms had been let upon a progressive rent. The Governor-General was now accused by his colleagues of having deceived his honourable masters by holding up to their hopes a revenue which could not be obtained. * *"

"The failure of exaggerated hopes was not the only evil whereof the farm by auction was accused. Zemindars, through whose agency the revenue of the district had formerly been realized, and whose office and authority had generally grown into hereditary possessions, comprising both an estate and a magistracy, or even a species of sovereignty, when the territory and jurisdiction were large; were either thrown out of their possessions; or from an ambition to hold the situation which had given opulence and rank to their families, perhaps for generations, they bid for the taxes more than the taxes could enable them to pay; and reduced themselves by the bargain to poverty and ruin. When the revenues were farmed to the zemindars, these contractors were induced to turn upon the ryots, and others from whom their collections were levied, the same rack which was applied to themselves. When they were farmed to the new adventurer who looked only to a temporary profit, and who had no interest in the permanent prosperity of a people with whom he had no permanent connexion, every species of exaction to which no punishment was attached, or of which the punishment could by artifice be evaded, was to him a fountain of gain." (Vol. IV. p. 3).

"The five years' lease expired in April, 1777; and the month of July of that year had arrived before any plan for the current and future years had yet been determined. By acknowledgement of all parties, the country had been so grievously over-taxed, as to have been altogether unable to carry up its payments to the level of the taxation. According to the statement of the Accountant-General, dated the 12th of July, 1777, the remissions upon the five-years' lease amounted to 1,18,79,576 Rupees; and the balances, of which the greater part were wholly irrecoverable, amounted to 1,29,26,910 rupees. * * * on the 15th of July, it was determined that the following plan should be adopted for the year; that the lands should be offered to the old zemindars on the rent-roll or assessment of the last year, or upon a new estimate formed by the provincial council." (Vol. IV. pp. 9 and 10).

"The above mode of settlement was renewed from year to year, till 1781, when a Committee of Revenue was formed. It was intrusted to the Committee to form a plan for the future assessment and collection of the revenues. And the following are the expedients of which they made choice: to form an estimate of the abilities of the several districts, form antecedent accounts, without recurring to local inspection and research: to lease the revenues, without intermediate agents, to the zemindars, where the zemindary was of considerable extent: and, that they might save government the trouble of detail, in those places where the revenues were in the hands of a number of petty renters, to let them altogether, upon annual contracts." (Mill. Vol. IV. p 254) But nothing seemed to improve the financial position of the Company. "The net territorial revenues of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, instead of increasing had actually declined. In the year ending the 1st of May 1772 (the last year of management through native naib Dewans) they amounted to the sum of 2,126,766£ and in the year ending on the same day in 1785, to that of 2,072,968£. In Lord Cornwallis' celebrated revenue letter dated the 16th November 1786 it is allowed, that the state of the accounts exhibits a debt in India of 8,91,25,518 rupees, and assets valued at 5,81,24,567, with a balance against the Company of 3,10,00,950. But Lord Cornwallis observes, that the amount of assets is so much made up for the sake of show, that is, a delusion, that it presents a result widely different from the truth; and that the balance between the debts, and such assets as are applicable to their extinction, would not, in his opinion, fall short of 7,50,00,000 rupees." (Vol. IV. p. 358).

Thus it fell to the lot of the Bengal people to pay the maximum of land revenue so that a huge deficit balance in the accounts of the Company could be liquidated Mahomed Reza Khan from his practical experience had found that the maximum realisation that could be made was about Rs. 1.60 crores. The total cultivated area in Bengal at that time, according to the estimate of Grant, was 11.5 million acres. Taking 13 mds. of rice as the production per acre, the value of produce per acre was approximately Rs. 6 and 8 annas. The value of the total production of 11.5 million acres would come to Rs. 7.48 crores.[1] Sir John Shore's estimate was only Rs. 6 crores.[2] Taking ¼ of the gross produce of land as the land revenue due to the State the total revenue assessment could

[1] M. N Gupta– *Land System of Bengal*, p. 132
[2] Sir John Shore—para 109 of the minutes.

not exceed Rs. 1.87 crores if the rents were realised from the ryots direct. If zemindars are interposed an assessment of more than 1.67 crores could not be justified. Yet the Directors of the East India Company insisted that the net land revenue from Bengal with Midnapore and Bihar must not be less than Rs. 2.60 crores.[1] It is in the background of these conditions, namely, the huge debts of the East India Company and the insistence of the Directors that in 1790-91 a total *jumma* of Rs. 2,68,00,989 was fixed. This exceeded even Kashem Ali's assessment by Rs. 11,76,766. This assessment with slight variations was made the basis of the Permanent Settlement of 1793.

In coming to this assessment no consideration appears to have been paid to the large-scale decimation of population in the famine of 1770 whereby 1/3 of the population of Bengal was wiped out. Another factor to which Sir John Shore drew attention was the shortage of metal currency in Bengal. "Upon the whole I have no hesitation in concluding that, since the Company's acquisition of the dewanny, the current specie of the country has been greatly diminished in quantity; that the old channels of importation, by which the drains were formerly replenished, are now in a great measure closed; and that the necessity of supplying China, Madras and Bombay, with money, as well as the exportation of it by Europeans to England, will contribute still further to exhaust the country of its silver."[2] This had further decreased the money value of crops and to pay a certain cash rent the proportion of the total produce which the ryots had to part with increased.[3]

Whatever may have been the benefits the Permanent Settlement brought to the zemindars of later days, the zemindars with whom the Permanent Settlement was first concluded in 1793 could not bear the high incidence of taxation.

The Birbhum zemindary was created in 1722 by Jaffer Khan after the third Mahal revenue revision of Bengal referred to earlier. This zemindary was originally granted to Assid-Ulla, an Afghan. It consisted originally of 22 Parganas with a net revenue demand of Rs. 3,66,779. Three parganas were added seven

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[1] M. N. Gupta—*loc. cit.*, p. 133.

[2] Firminger—*On the Affairs of the East India Company, Volume* II, para 140. p. 33.

[3] Though Shore was of the opinion that Kashem Ali Khan's assessment was rack-renting and the total revenue from land in Bengal should not exceed Rs. 1.50 crores, yet when he returned to India as Governor-General after Cornwallis, he did nothing to mitigate the sufferings caused by the high assessment in the Permanent Settlement.

years later with a *jumma* of Rs. 10,857. Grant mentions that the *jumma* then settled was for only 1/3 of the zemindary and the zemindar (raja) was allowed to enjoy the remaining 2/3 as he was to keep a militia to protect the frontier against attacks of bandits from the Santal parganas, etc. Kashem Ali in 1760 took away this privilege and added a *"keffyet hustabood"* to the extent of Rs. 8,96,275. The total gross rental and the pargana *Toomary Jumma* of 1135 Bengali era appears from the following table taken from Grant's *"Analysis"*.

CHUCKS & PERGUNS		*Circars*	*Jumma Toomary 1135*
Chuck. Moorshedabad: Perganas			
Pgs. Akbershaky ..		Shereefabad	24,176
Barbeksing K. .		Do	38,823
Bherkondah K. ..		Do	19,737
Kootalpoor .		Do	16,796
Mulessir K. .		Audimber	78,656
Seroopsing ..		Do	55,171
Shahzaapoor			
Kerimgong ..		Do	3,776
Koownpertaub K		Do	1,622
Kenher Joar			
Mhola K. .		Do	2,012
Russoolpoor K ..		Do	1,298
Futtehpoor K. ..		Do	406
Pehtyal K. ..		Do	176
Mhelund K. ..		Shereefabad	1,958
Plassey K. .		Satgong	4,126
Dhawak K. ..		Audimber	11
			2,48,744
Shah			
Selimpoor ..	9,862	Shereefabad	..
Kehrgong .	800	Do	..
Kinker Joar			
M. Towfeer ..	195	Audimber	..
			10,857
			2,59,601

Chuck Burdwan 1135		*Circars*	*Jumma Toomary 1135*
Perg Beerbhoom ..	21,765	Mendarum	
Seinbhom ..	46,016	Do	
Sherigurrah ..	7,687	Do	
Kuttunga ..	10,763	Sherufeld	1,18,035
Zien Augul ..	26,923	Do	
Azmut shaky ..	1,529	Do	
Muzzeffer shaky ..	3,352	Do	
25			
Perg Total zemindary in 1135 and to 1172 of which, Ausil 3,71,137 and Towfeer ..	6,508	..	3,77,645
Abwabs to 1755, A.D.			
1st. Khasnovessy ..	3,942		
2nd. Chout Marhatta ..	63,780	68,222	
3rd. Zer Mat hoot ..	500		
Keffyet Hustabood in 1768 A.D.		8,96,275	9,64,497
Total gross Rental in 1168 and 1172 Bengali era			13,42,143
Deduct Serinjammy (Muscoorat only 3,120)			26,713
Total Malgoozary of the Zemy .. Sa. Rs.			13,15,430

It appears from the appendix 9 of Sir John Shore's minutes that by 1172 Bengali era i.e., in four years the jumma had to be reduced to Rs. 8 lakhs only. The following account taken from Hunter[1] would show the demand and collection from 1772 to 1776.

[1] Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 41 of the 1965 Reprint.

Year	*Actual demand* Rs.	*Actual collection* Rs.
1772	9,94,130	5,52,070
1773	10,30,890	6,23,650
1774	10,17,990	5,25,330
1775	10,09,830	5,39,970
1776	1,11,482	6,33,500

Thus, the actual collection never amounted to even a half of the assessment shown in Grant's *Analysis*. This collection was when the land had been given in farm. In spite of the utmost severities adopted in the realisation of land revenue, the collection never rose to expectations and by the time when the Government took over direct collection in about 1790 the jail was filled up with revenue prisoners not one of whom had any prospect of regaining liberty except by an amnesty. The severe effect of the famine of 1769-70 appears to have been completely overlooked by the English administrators at that time. According to Hunter, of the 6,000 rural communes cultivating land in the Birbhum District in 1765 not more than 4,500 remained in 1785. The land cultivated by them relapsed to jungle and while the country every year became a more total waste, the English Governor constantly demanded an increased land tax.

In such state of affairs it was decided to make a detailed estimate of the assets of the Birbhum zemindary. Sherburne who was appointed Collector started measuring lands and preparing a rental of the different parganas. On the basis of such measurements Sherburne recommended an yearly revenue of Rs. 6.5 lakhs and to begin with at Rs. 6.11 lakhs in the first year. Even with this reduced assessment, collection was never satisfactory; the collector constantly had to lend his troops to assist the raja in collecting rents from the tenants. In 1788-89, when the raja tried to increase the rents of the tenants there was a peasant revolt. In 1788, the raja Md. Al Jamma Khan was a minor and Keating, the collector, was appointed manager and Lala Ram Nath was made the dewan. On the basis of figures supplied by Lala Ram Nath, Keating recommended a revenue of Rs. 6,50,000 subject to the abolition of *sair* duties. This demand at first became the demand of the decennial settlement of 1790 and later became the demand of the Permanent Settlement of 1793.

But the raja of Birbhum like many other zemindars fared ill

under the Permanent Settlement. The relentless sale law according to which proportionate parts of the estate were put up to sale for each default of monthly *Kist* began to take effect from the very first year of the decennial settlement and started the beginning of the end of the great zemindary. The statement below will show the number of lots put to sale for the arrears of revenue noted against each

Year	No. of lots sold and new mahals created	Revenue demand		
		Rs.	a.	p.
1790	67	14,908	3	10
1791	4	4,324	7	0
1792	2	140	3	0
1793	1	449	6	0
1794	11	28,684	5	0
1796	2	68,715	11	10
1797	25	1,06,127	15	0
1798	65	1,88,127	8	2
1799	62	68,940	11	7
1800	11	1,443	12	1
1801	40	55,706	11	4

That the profits of the zemindars were rigorously low at the Permanent Settlement is well illustrated from the effect given above. Hereditary landed aristocracy of Bengal received the severest blow by the Permanent Settlement and they and all traditions that they stood for disappeared. The entire social organization received the rudest shock to which much of the depravement of cultural and economic values that has gone on since then can be traced.

As the number of *mahals* went on increasing with the revenue sales, the total revenue actually fell to Rs. 6,23,000 in 1795 because the demands on the newly created *mahals* were made on *hustabood* papers. Sales of bigger lots from 1793 increased the total revenue demand to some extent and the quinquennial register of 1799 showed 222 *mahals* with a total revenue demand of Rs. 6,91,824. Between 1840 and 1848, 153 petty estates were created by resumption of invalid *lakheraj*, which brought an addition of Rs. 13,149 to the revenue demand. Since then, the fluctuation of the revenue demand of the district has been

almost entirely due to transfer of *touzis* due to changes in the jurisdiction of the district.

According to the Settlement Report of 1924-32, the rent collecting interests in the district were the zemindars along with Patnidars, Dar-patnidars and Chhe-patnidars and under them came the actual tillers, the ryots and the under-ryots. The entire area of the district according to that survey was 11,15,498 acres or 1,742.92 sq. miles. The distribution of the total land of the district in general registers A & B is as follows.

Estates borne on registers	Number	Area (in acres)	Revenue Rs.	a.	p.
A. Part I	1,104	9,52,384.06	10,32,187	2	5
K M estates	6	751.59	3,045	7	8
F.S. estates	74	7,640.85	3,744	13	0
A. Part II	308	1,07,338.27			
B. Part I	399	23,957.41			
B. Part II	19	6,209.38			
B. Part III		105.01			
River area outside the record	...	17,111.88			
		11,15,498.45 acres or 1,743 sq. miles.	10,38,977	7	1

The total revenue demand as shown above was almost reached in 1887-88 when the total number of revenue paying estates was 1,003 and the total revenue demand was Rs. 10,01,591. The total amount of road and public works cesses was Rs. 1,59,125.

Present system of assessment and collection of land revenue

The West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, was brought into operation in two stages. In April 1955, all these zemindary and intermediary interests were abolished but the ryoti rent collecting interests were allowed to remain. All the rent collecting interests were abolished next year in April 1956 and the settlement changed its character from a zemindary settlement to a ryotwari settlement No revision of rents or rates of rent were made and no survey was taken up. The records of rights of the tenants as they stood after the survey and settlement operations of 1924-32 were taken as the basis of this ryotwari settlement. The rent of the ryot or under-ryot who held all the lands of his jumma in *khas*

was allowed to stand as it was. Where the jumma had a sub-infeudation in part, the rent of the lands held *khas* in that *jumma* was assessed afresh on the basis of prevailing rates of rent of similar kind of land in the adjacent areas. The settlement operation for this revision of rent roll was started from the stage of attestation and a revised rent roll for the entire district was thus prepared. The total demand on the basis of this revised rent roll for the district of Birbhum as it stood on 1 Baisakh 1367 B.S. is Rs. 39,43,742. The average incidence of rent on 10,68,484 acres is Rs. 3.69 per acre. According to Hunter[1] the rate of rent in Birbhum district varied between Re. 1 as. 4 to Rs. 3/- per bigha or Rs. 3 as. 12 to Rs. 9/- per acre at the time of the Permanent Settlement. The average rate of rent as reported in the *Survey and Settlement Report* of 1924-32 is Rs. 3 as. 14 p. 1 per acre.[2] The present average rate of rent appears to be lower than that at the time of the Permanent Settlement.

Present collection system

The Collector is the chief officer in charge of revenue collection in the district. An Addtional District Magistrate for estates acquisition has been appointed in the district and he is in direct charge of the affair and exercises all the powers of the Collector in the matter of collection of revenue. In each sub-division, the Sub-divisional Officer is in overall charge of the collections. A Sub-divisional Land Reforms Officer has been appointed in each sub-division who is in direct charge of the collection in the sub-division. At each thana level, a Junior Land Reforms Officer has been appointed On the basis of the summary settlement report as stated in the previous para Tenants Ledger has been written showing the total amount of rent and the cesses to be realized from each tenant. For the purpose of actual collection from the tenants, a number of tahsildars have been appointed usually one for each mouza of moderate size, more than one if the mouza is very big and occasionally a number of small mouzas are lumped together to be in charge of one tahsildar. The tahsildar grants rent receipts to the tenants on realization and from time to time, the amounts are credited to the Sub-divisional Treasury or the District Treasury as the case may be. Government-printed forms of rent receipts are used and a strict account of the number of rent receipt books issued to each tahsildar and the number actually utilised is kept in the office of the J.L.R.O. In case of default, the amounts are realisable by the Certificate pro-

[1] Hunter--Statistical Analysis, Vol. IV, p. 371.
[2] Final Report on the Survey and Settlement, 1924-32. p. 74.

cedure in accordance with the Bengal Public Demands Recovery Act. All the J.L.R.Os have been vested with the powers of a Certificate Officer. A table of collections from the years 1372 B.S. (1965-66) to 1376 B.S. (1969-70) is given in Appendix B.

LAND REFORMS

History of relationship between landlord and tenant

The conception of private property in land is a very complicated one in India especially in Bengal. Radhakumud Mukherjee[1] has shown that in the Vedic Age absolute property right of the actual tiller existed in the land. The institution of kingship grew out of the necessity for having a protector both against external agreession as well as against internal disputes. The first idea of payment of a land revenue to the king arose out of the necessity of providing a remuneration for the king for his duties. The land revenue which thus started as a voluntary payment later on gradually took the shape of a right of the king on a share of the produce of the land. With the acknowledgement of the king's right to a share of the produce of the land arose the complicated questions on proprietory right over the land. A detailed examination of this complex subject is not called for here and it may be sufficient to say that absolute proprietory right in land in Bengal rested with no single individual and each one from the actual tiller to the State had some right on it. Dr. R. G. Basak has shown in his article Land Sale Documents of Ancient Bengal[2] that in Bengal at least during the Gupta period the village commune had some ownership right on the land situated in the village. Sales of such a land to an outsider required the consent of the village elders as well as a report as regards the transferability of the land from the village Record Keeper who was known as *Pustapala*. In the early revenue history of Bengal i.e. about the time of the accession of the Dewani by the East India Company we find a class of ryots were known as Khud-kast ryots. These ryots had occupancy rights on any land they cultivated in the village of their residence irrespective of the fact that the actual land cultivated by a Khud-kast ryot might change from year to year. This special incident of the Khud-kast ryot appears to have had its origin in the communal land revenue as referred to in the several copper plate land sale documents mentioned in Dr. Basak's article. A *firman* of Emperor Aurangzeb[3] refers to this class of

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[1] Indian Land System, Ancient, Mediaeval & Modern.
[2] Sir Asutosh Mukherjee Silver Jubilee Volumes: Vol. 3, Part II. pp 475-496.
[3] Harrington: Analysis, Vol II, pp. 300-306.

ryots as *Arbab-i-Zamin* or proprietors of the land. The 13th clause of the said *firman* mentions that these ryots could sell a part of his land which shows that their right of ownership in such lands was recognised by the Mughal Government.

Much of the misunderstanding of the early British administration briefly outlined in the previous section arose because they took the existing conditions of revenue administration at the time of the Dewani to be the Mughal administration of land in India. The fact remains that in Bengal the Mughal system was dead since the time of Murshid Kuli Khan (Jaffar Khan) when Abwabs began to be imposed gradually enhancing the payment to be made by the ryot beyond all reasonable bounds. The later Subahdars after the death of Emperor Auranzeb became practically independent of Delhi and throwing away all strings of good government to the wind and completely oblivious of the conditions of the peasantry started severe exactions. Such collections were made through the zamindars who in the nature of things then prevailing had a police force under them and could utilise their manifold power for good or for evil in enforcing realisation of any amount of rent from the tenants in their own way. The only redeeming feature existing in the then conditions was that the pressure of population on land was not so severe as now, and the ryots could flee away from a particularly severe zamindar and take land under one more benign.[1]

After the disastrous failure of the farming system introduced by Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement in A.D. 1793. Lord Cornwallis' plans were not oblivious of the welfare of the ryots. It was declared that the rent of the Khud-kast ryot could not be enhanced and to Cornwallis' mind it appeared that the provision of granting *patta* to the ryots would definitely secure the latter's rights against the rapacity of the zamindars. In actual practice however it was the ryot himself who mostly oppossed the issue of the '*Patta*', as by this time after nearly sixty years rack-renting and torture the ryots had come to look upon every innovation with greatest suspicion. But whatever emphasis Lord Cornwallis laid in his plan for the welfare of the ryots, the British administration in India after Lord

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The target of collections at the farming settlements, the target set at the annual settlements and the target at the Permanent Settlement were all sought to be justified by saying that the East India Company was following the Mughal system.

Cornwallis practically shirked their responsibility. Section 58 of Regulation VIII, 1793 required the form of the *patta* to be approved by the Collector and the intention was that the latter will see that the rates were in conformity with the Nirikhbandi of the district.[1] But by Regulation IV, 1794 it was declared that even in the case of Khud-kast ryots, a dispute about the rent had to be referred to the Civil Court which further aggravated the suspicion of the ryots and created more enstrangement. Another plan of Lord Cornwallis was to appoint a 'Patwari' in every village to keep accounts and suppllementary records and to produce these before the Collector for inspection. This was never resorted to and the good intention of Lord Cornwallis before long became a dead letter.

Anti-tenant legislation after Permanent Settlement from 1793 to 1845

While zamindaris began to be liquidated by revenue sales almost since the inception of the decennial settlement, the zamindars clamoured for more power to enforce collection of rent from their tenants. This led to the notorious *haptam* regulation (Regulation VII of 1799) which authorised the zamindar to seize and sell the crops and chattels of the ryots in case of default of rent and power was given to the zamindar including their inferior employees to force their way into the houses of the tenants and seize their personal properties. The Pancham Regulation (Regulation V of 1712) in an attempt to give relief to the ryot actually made his position worse. It gave right to the ryot to stay the seizure of his crops by instituting a civil suit in the civil court. This was a very curious procedure contrary to all tenents of natural justice to reverse the normal procedure which requires the claimant first to prove his claim. Poor and helpless as the ryot was very few of them could take recourse to law against the rapacity of the zamindars. Another harsh provision that was made was in section 5 of Regulation XLIV of 1793 which provided that where the whole or a portion of a zamindari is sold at a revenue sale all tenancies of whatever description shall stand cancelled from the day of sale. Though Justice Trevor in the Great Rent case in 1865[2] declared that this provision could not affect the occupancy right of a Khud-kast ryot, there is no record of how many Khud-kast ryots were dispossessed or how many had to pay enhanced rent on their being allowed to continue in their tenancies till the

[1] Tradition records existence of pargana rates whose history is obscure. However, the pargana rates practically lapsed since the time of Murshid Kuli Khan when Abwabs began to be superimposed on the rent.

[2] Thakuranee Dossi vs. Bishessor Mukherji (1865 full bench) 3 W.R. 29. BLR 2001.

time of this judicial decision. In 1822 Regulation XI of 1822 all that was provided was that the purchaser at a revenue sale could not avoid the right of a *Khud-kast Kadimi ryot*. The use of the word Kadimi for the first time in this regulation seems to go upon the scheme of Cornwallis whose plan of Permanent Settlement envisaged protection of all Khud-kast ryots. The effect of Regulation XI of 1822 therefore was to protect only the rights of those Khud-kast ryots whose tenancies had subsisted from the time of the Decennial Settlement. Thus occupancy rights acquired after the date of the Decennial Settlement were not protected. A still further retrograde step was taken by Act I of 1845 and the purchaser at a revenue sale was given power to eject all ryots other than the *Khud-kast Kadimi ryots*.

Rent Act of 1859

The first legislation to secure the right of the tenant was Act X of 1859 or the Rent Act. This act, while avoiding to define tenancy, conceived a classification of ryots into three classes (1) ryots at fixed rates, viz., those who could show that their rent had not changed for 20 years, and would be presumed to be holding at fixed rates from the time of the Permanent Settlement; (2) occupancy ryots who had cultivated or held land for a continuous period of 12 years; (3) Non-occupancy ryots, who had not cultivated or held the land for 12 years. The Rent Act also laid down the fixed procedure for enhancement of the rent seeking thereby to limit arbitrary enhancements of the zamindars. Judicial pronouncement in the Rent Case of 1865[1] decided that in case of dispute the rent paid by the ryots previously shall be deemed to be fair and equitable unless the contrary is proved in a suit. The view that fair rent was economic rent as defined by Malthus was overruled.

It has been stated earlier that during the Mughal administration Khud-kast ryots had the right to sell their land. This right was denied in the Permanent Settlement as well as in the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885. It was not until 1928 that this right was recognised.

The land system in Birbhum prior to the acquisition of the Intermidiary rights by the State may be briefly mentioned here. The Zemindars with Patnidars, Dar-patnidars and Chhe-patnidars generally formed the class of landlords and under them came the ryots. The pattern of land holding as found in the Settlement operation of 1924-32 was as follows:

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[1] Thakooranee Dossi Vs. Bishessor Mukherji (1865 full bench) 3 W.R 29; BLR 2002.

Land in direct occupation of	*Area (in acres)*	*Percentage of the entire area of the district*
Proprietors	55,633.20	4.9871
Tenure holders	163,174.09	14.4316
Ryots	858,252.53	76.8352
Under-ryots	21,326.75	2.2131

Only 12 per cent of the ryoti holdings was found to be held at fixed rents (Mokarari). But the whole of this meagre percentage cannot represent the old Khud-kast Kadimi holdings existing at the time of the Permanent Settlement. For, many of such Mokarari holdings were recorded as such by the presumption of section 50 of the B.T. Act as the landlords failed to prove that there has been changes in the rent in these cases. This small percentage of Mokarari holdings found in 1934 clearly indicates that many of the Khud-kast ryots existing at the time of the Permanent Settlement were either evicted or had their rents enhanced after Revenue sales of estates.

Service tenures and tenancies

The most important of service tenures which is peculiar to this district is the Ghatwali Tenure created by the Raja of Rajnagar. To save the kingdom from external aggression. the area was encircled by a wall and the entrances to the kingdom through openings in the wall were called ghats. The persons appointed to guard these ghats were the Ghatwals. Originally, there were 40 such ghats. Two parganas. Sarhat and Deoghar. were transferred to Santal Perganas and Bisenpur was transferred to Bankura. After these transfers, 332 incumbents with 3,288 bighas in their possession remained to this district. As a definite service was expected of these ghatwals, these lands could not be treated as Lakheraj and could not be resumed under Regulation III of 1819. But the Ghatwals were eager to pay rent and thus settle their possession. Accordingly, notwithstanding legal quibblings, these lands were resumed by the Government in 1898 and assessed to rent. The settlement was concluded with those in possession. The average rate of rent was Rs. 2.75 per bigha and 35 new estates were formed with a total revenue demand of Rs. 3,059.37.

The Chowkidari Chakran lands were originally land assigned by the village commune for duties of watch and ward in the village. Under the Muslim rule. the zemindar was entrusted with civil and criminal administration of their zemindari and the village watch-

men were placed under the zemindar for sundry duties in connection with the collection of revenue as well. Regulation VIII of 1793 directed that these Chakran land be annexed to the Malguzari land of the zemindari. Finally, with the taking away of the police duties from the zemindars these lands were resumed by the Government and settled with the zemindars under Act VI of 1870.

A few peculiar service tenures may be mentioned. In 1755, Raja Asad-Uzzaman Khan granted about 325 bighas of land as rent free tenures to certain persons for rendering service as *daftris* in the office of the Raja. As this grant subsisted from before the permanent settlement, these *chakran* lands were not resumed till 1928 and was entered in Register B Part III and treated as service lands under the Government. In village Shib Rautara, there was a service tenure created for praying to the gods for the welfare of the raja of Hetampur, while in Moulpur there was a service tenancy for driving monkeys out of the village.

Present Status of the holdings

With effect from the date of vesting of the intermediary interests, all zemindari and tenures have been extinguished. The zemindar or the tenure holder has been permitted to retain all homesteads, land comprised in or appertaining to buildings and structures, non-agricultural land in the khas possession of the intermediary on the date of vesting, not exceeding fifteen acres and agricultural land in khas possession on the date of vesting to the extent of 25 acres. For all these lands the zemindar or intermediary has been treated as a ryot under the State and assessed to rent. The previous ryoti and under-ryoti holdings have been converted as tenancies directly under the State and given ryoti status. All lakheraj holdings have been assessed to rent and all service tenure and tenancies resettled with the possessors and assessed to rent. Under the Land Reforms Act, the ryot has been declared proprietor of his tenancy and the holding has been declared heritable and transferable.

Special provision with respect to Scheduled Tribes

The Bengal Tenancy Act made a provision restricting the transfer of holdings of the Tribal people. These provisions have been elaborated and embodied in Chapter IIA of the Land Reforms Act. While a Scheduled Tribe ryot is proprietor of his tenancy and his tenancy remains heritable, transfer in any manner other than the following shall be void. The tenancy holding of a Scheduled Tribe ryot is transferable only in one of the following manners:

(a) by complete usufructuary mortgage for a period not exceeding seven years to a person belonging to the same Scheduled Tribe to which the transferor belongs;

(b) by sale or gift to the Government for a public or charitable purpose;

(c) by simple mortgage to the Government or to a registered Co-operative Society;

(d) by gift or will to a person belonging to the same Scheduled Tribe to which the transferor belongs, with previous written permission of the Revenue Officer containing the terms of the transfer;

(e) by a complete usufructuary mortgage for a term not exceeding seven years to a person other than a member of the same Scheduled Tribe to which the transferor belongs or by sale or exchange in favour of any person with the previous written permission of the Revenue Officer. The Revenue Officer is enjoined to withhold his permission for transfer to a person other than one belonging to the same Tribe as the transferor unless he is satisfied that such a one is unavailable. As a further safeguard, it is provided that no court shall recognise any document executed contrary to the express provisions of this law. The holding of the Scheduled Tribe ryot has been declared exempt from sale in execution of any decree of a court.

Agrarian movement

The only agrarian movement was the Santal rebellion of 1855. This did not strictly originate in this district but spread into it from the adjacent district of Santal Perganas. While dispossession from land by process of law was one of the causes of this uprising there were some other causes too.[1] It was quickly quelled and in the seventies of the last century Chhoto Nagpur Tenancy legislation provided relief to the Santals and there has been no further uprisings.

ADMINISTRATION OF OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE: CENTRAL AND STATE

Commercial Taxes

The Suri Charge Office under the directorate of the commercial taxes has started functioning from 13 October 1969. This charge office is responsible for the assessment for and collection of the commercial taxes under the Bengal Financial (Sales Tax) Act, 1941, Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Taxation Act, 1941, West Bengal Sales Tax Act, 1954, Central Sales Tax Act, 1956 and Paddy Purchase Act, 1970. The following table indicates the number of registered dealers and collections under these Acts:

[1] *vide* Chapter XI.

Acts	No. of registered dealers		Collection (Rs.)	
	1969-70	1970-71	1969-70	1970-71
Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act, West Bengal Sales Tax Act	491	551	5,74,631	19,45,913
Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Taxation Act	20	23	2,95,951	8,65,592
Central Sales Tax Act	210	218	8,483	28,662
Paddy Purchase Act	60	70	4,13,921	12,90,148

Excise

A statement of revenue collected (in Rs.) against different excise articles from 1961-62 to 1970-71 is given in Appendix C.

Agricultural Income Tax

The number of assessees, amount of demand and collection under the Bengal Agricultural Income Tax Act, 1944 are given below:

Year	Assessees	Demand (Rs.)	Collection (Rs.)
1965-66	1,316	1,30,811	1,22,223
1966-67	1,305	1,11,793	1,16,215
1967-68	1,288	1,79,382	1,91,749
1968-69	1,307	2,50,534	2,02,533
1969-70	1,264	2,70,259	2,25,359

Income Tax

Number of assessees, demand raised and collection made in respect of income tax in the district from 1961-62 to 1969-70 are given below:

Year	Assessees	Demand (Rs.)	Collection (Rs.)
1961-62	1,624	10,18,000	4,24,000
1962-63	1,633	9,92,000	6,80,000
1963-64	2,106	9,38,000	6,42,000
1964-65	3,313	8,03,000	6,19,000
1965-66	3,189	8,22,000	5,83,000
1966-67	2,858	10,43,000	7,93,000
1967-68	3,360	11,31,000	6,89,000
1968-69	3,341	17,54,000	9,37,000
1969-70	3,496	18,78,000	14,25,000

APPENDIX A

ABSTRACT ACCOUNT OF THE DECREASE IN THE SETTLEMEENT OF THE DEWANNY LANDS, FROM 1169 TO 1172, INCLUSIVE; OR FROM APRIL 1762 TO APRIL, 1765 INCLUSIVE

		Rs.	as.	g.	k.	Rs.	as.	g.	k.
Settlement of Cossim Ali Khan, in 1169 B.S. or A.D. 1762/3		.	..			2,41,18,912	4	5	2
Settlement of Nundcoomar in 1170 or A.D. 1762/63	..	1,77,04,766	9	2	3				
Add, Nuzzeranah Mokurery, and articles separately collected	..	5,64,575	15	5	2	1,82,69,342	8	8	1
Difference		..	..			58,49,569	11	17	1
Decrease in 1171, or 1763/4	..	13,497	12	12	1				
Increase in the same year	..	6,409	13	11	1				
Net Decrease in 1171	..					7,087	15	1	0
Net difference between the Settlement of Cossim Ali and Nundcoomar 1172/73		..	..			58,56,657	10	18	1
Decrease allowed by the Nabob Mahomed Reza Khan	..	31,06,024	10	15	0				
Increase in some Districts	..	8,72,781	15	18	2				
						22,33,242	11	6	2
						80,89,900	6	4	3

APPENDIX B

Land Revenue Collections in Birbhum District : *1965-70*

Year	RENT		ROAD & P.W. CESS		CESS	
	Demand	Collection	Demand	Collection	Demand	Collection
1372 B.S. (65-66)	A— 5,22,889 C—31,99,258	A— 5,11,830 C—27,45,255	A— 28,518 C— 1,04,902	A— 23,704 C— 86,661	A— 47,271 C— 1,80,821	A— 40,172 C— 1,43,764
1373 B.S. (66-67)	A— 6,91,553 C—31,72,689	A— 5,32,400 C—24,75,074	A— 29,034 C— 1,03,196	A— 23,444 C— 80,019	A— 43,976 C— 1,75,794	A— 34,343 C— 1,33,813
1374 B.S. (67-68)	A— 8,92,436 C—32,53,962	A— 6,92,023 C—25,88,230	A— 34,599 C— 1,07,797	A— 24,203 C— 82,611	A— 57,420 C— 1,83,713	A— 48,820 C— 1,42,724
1375 B.S. (68-69)	A— 9,89,707 C—31,44,323	A— 8,23,591 C—25,06,636	A— 34,668 C— 1,00,613	A— 29,705 C— 1,00,330	A— 59,038 C— 1,25,101	A— 49,672 C— 1,33,690
1376 B.S. (69-70)	A—11,73,413 C—31,22,624	A— 3,81,109 C—15,95,898	A— 2,57,119 C— 2,72,012	A— 88,718 C— 1,45,230	A— 72,127 C— 1,78,933	A— 27,516 C— 93,572

A—Arrear.
C—Current.

APPENDIX C

Excise Revenue Collections in Birbhum District: *1961-62 to 1970-71*

	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71
Country Spirit	2,44,459	2,74,600	3,39,745	4,10,901	5,16,329	6,50,146	9,70,375	8,49,743	10,51,050	9,33,578
Pochwai	9,11,315	7,39,893	6,25,601	9,25,460	9,25,389	8,81,817	9,06,127	11,58,544	6,79,355	6,11,067
Tari	27,552	24,965	22,967	25,314	27,157	29,193	34,794	37,772	35,722	34,443
Ben	810	721	939	1,028	1,712	1,904	1,975	3,518	3,679	3,602
Wines & Spirits	4,689	5,123	5,926	7,836	11,553	14,961	21,403	23,715	22,652	21,970
Commercial Spirits	895	877	946	809	768	446	450	401	445	1,805
Opium	11,868	11,242	11,525	11,988	11,908	11,230	10,479	10,022	9,279	8,002
Ganja	33,342	18,142	41,801	1,11,404	58,978	1,12,757	1,15,405	1,31,580	1,44,766	68,375
Bhang	4,332	4,328	4,700	5,073	4,769	4,536	6,242	5,841	6,111	5,515
Fines	19,665	25,535	17,940	20,879	21,766	22,810	36,770	29,342	22,465	22,352
Total	12,58,927	11,05,406	10,72,090	15,20,692	15,80,329	17,29,800	21,04,020	22,50,478	19,75,524	17,10,699

CHAPTER XI

LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE

INTRODUCTORY

Situated on the extreme western border of the province of Bengal and verging on the hills and fastnesses of Chota Nagpur, Birbhum area during the Mughal days was prone to the attacks of marauders from the west. During the Mughal administration, when the zemindars were the keepers of law and order within the zemindari and protectors of the people from external aggression, the Birbhum zemindary was created as a sort of military tenure by Murshid Kuli Khan, the Subahdar of Bengal. The Birbhum Raja, holding the zemindari partly as a semi-independent chief and partly as a military fief-holder was responsible for the defence of the western frontier. For the purpose of guarding the frontiers, the Raja of Birbhum created the *ghatwali* tenures and settled for the most part mercenary soldiers hailing from upper India, both Rajputs and Afghans. A thanadari police was also created by the Raja and the zemindari was divided into several thanas where a number of troopers and foot soldiers were stationed under a thanadar. The main function of this police was to collect rents but at times they performed the duties of protectors of law and order.

Whatever might have been the military abilities of Asadulla Khan, the zemindar who received the military fief, the Raja of Birbhum about the time the English assumed the Dewany was a decrepit man unable to sit on his seat due to a painful disease and far less able to ride a horse and lead his army. The result was that Birbhum fell an easy prey to the marauders. In 1785, the Collector of Murshidabad, under whose jurisdiction Birbhum lay, wrote to the Governor-General asking for troops to act against the bands of plunderers ravaging Birbhum. By about June 1785, the marauders were reported to be one thousand strong and preparing for an organised attack of the tract. Next year, the brigands were in occupation of Birbhum and established in strong positions with permanent camps. The public revenue was looted on the way and the trade and commerce of the East India Company came to a stand still. G. R. Foley, a civil officer of the East India Company was posted to Birbhum to assist the Raja in fighting the marauders. No records are available of what Foley did at Birbhum. But Cornwallis was by now

convinced that Birbhum could never be freed from plunderers so long it remained a remote dependency of Murshidabad. Accordingly, in 1787, Birbhum and Vishnupur were made into a compact district. The first Collector was Pye but he soon relinquished his charge and was succeeded by Sherburne on 29 April 1787. Sherburne removed the headquarters from Vishnupur to Suri. The defence of the country was taken up by the Collector and the Raja relieved of his responsibility. The larger bodies of marauders were promptly broken up but they dispersed into the neighbouring areas and in October 1787 a Birbhum treasure party was attacked and overpowered on the south of the Ajay and silver currency worth £ 3000/- carried off by the dacoits. It remained for Christopher Keating who succeeded Sherburne on 29 October 1788 to bring order in the district. From February 1789 to June 1789 Keating fought more than one pitched battle with the marauders. While Keating somehow protected Birbhum by guarding the passes through which the marauders entered, the latter made a detour and crossing the Ajay reached Vishnupur where the Raja had been imprisoned for failure to pay the land revenue and there was disorder. The people in sympathy with the Raja did nothing to help the government to fight the marauders and an English factory was burnt. In the rainy season the marauders retreated to their strongholds leaving a guard at Vishnupur. Keating then applied to the Governor-General for assistance by picked men from the regular army. A detachment of regular military force was sent with which six important passes were guarded. But during the winter of 1789, the bandits still had the upper hand and on 5th June following, Rajnagar, the capital of the Raja of Birbhum, was sacked by the bandits. During the winter of 1788-89, Keating secured all the passes against the entry of the marauders and the bandits, unable to find an entrance into Birbhum, made a detour and collected on the bank of the Ajay. Here the forces of Keating with the support of the local people ultimately finished them off.

From the middle of 1790 till the Santal uprising in 1855 the district was more or less peaceful.

Santal uprising of 1855

The famine of 1771 which carried away a third of the population of Bengal upset the equilibrium between population and cultivable land. Large areas of fertile and once productive land fell out of tillage and reverted to jungles harbouring wild beasts of all descriptions. The permanent settlement of 1790 assessed the

revenue on the zemindars at nine-tenths of the *hastabood* of all lands in the zemindari, irrespective of cultivation. To meet this heavy demand on revenue, the zemindars had to seek cultivators for the waste lands. The Santals of the adjacent area could easily be induced to come and settle upon the waste lands and lands laid waste by lack of cultivators after the famine. The Santal is by nature a good and industrious cultivator and a hunter. The waste lands of Birbhum offered him not only cultivation but also a fertile hunting ground. Gradually, the Santal settlements prospered. This prosperity attracted greedy merchants and money-lenders to the Santal villages and in every business-deal the simple-minded and ignorant Santal was cheated. Once a Santal borrowed money or grain from the money-lender, he and his family became a serf to him. However much he may toil to repay his debt, the money-lender still had a claim on him and when he attempted to run away to escape his extortion, the money-lender would bring a suit and obtain a decree behind his back and seize all his cattle and crop. The poor and ignorant Santal would have accepted his lot of serfdom and partial slavery to Capital, had not another thing changed the course of events. In 1854, it was decided to construct the Railway and that gave work and wages at a scale hitherto unknown to the Santal. The industrious Santals worked on the Railway construction and secured an amount of wealth unthinkable before. The Santal then realised that he need not suffer the serfdom and slavery to Capital any longer. The influx of money had raised the prices of grains. An excellent harvest gathered in the winter of 1854 had fetched a good price and the economic condition of the Santals had improved. Still, the cold season of 1854 and 1855 found the Santals in a strangely restless state.

Oppressions seldom go unresisted, and the Santals, gradually realising the cause of their increasing debts and poverty, were thinking of means to put an end to their troubles. Before the beginning of the insurrection, the Parganaits and Manjhis of different Santal villages were cogitating in right earnest about the means to put an end to the troubles. To people in such a frame of mind leaders are seldom wanting. Two brothers Kanhu and Sidu, inhabitants of a village long oppressed by the usury of the money-lenders, stood forth as deliverers of the Santals claiming their right to lead the people to divine inspiration. The god of the Santals, they claimed, appeared before them on seven successive days; at first as a white man in the Santal's

costume, then as a flame of fire with a knife glowing in the flame, then as a perforated trunk of the *Sal* tree which forms the hub of the bullock cart wheel of the Santal. The god delivered to the brothers a sacred book. Slips of paper, which the brothers claimed were showered down from the sky, were spread throughout the Santal country. The leaders then petitioned the Superintendent* to do them justice adding that their god had commanded them to wait no longer. The Superintendent knew nothing of the people or their wrongs. A petition to the Commissioner of Bhagalpur division had almost the same fate. The officers of the East India Company were content so long as the revenue came in and had no inclination either to know the people or appreciate what their trouble was. The peace-loving Santals who had long submitted to the oppressions had expected that their wrongs would be remedied by the English rulers. When nothing came out of their petitions to them, the unsophisticated people unaccustomed to fight for their own rights in a legitimate manner rose in a body to right their wrongs. The Santal national emblem, the *Sal* twig, was sent to every Santal village and the people obedient to the signal assembled with their inseparable bows and arrows in expectation of something happening. On 30 June 1855, a vast expedition was on the move with the apparent object of reaching Calcutta and laying their grievances before the Governor-General in Calcutta. The brothers Kanhu and Sidu had raised a storm which they had not the capacity to control. At first, the movement was not anti-British nor anti-government. So long the meagre provisions brought by the people lasted, the expeditioners were peaceful. But soon the stocks were finished and then arose the necessity of securing further provisions either by loot or by benevolence. The oppressors of the Santals became panic-stricken and they bribed a police *daroga* and Naib Sezawal of thana Dighee in the district of Bhagalpur by the name of Mahesh Dutta to arrest the two brothers on a false charge of burglary. Mahesh Dutta started with his men but was intercepted midway by emissaries of Kanhu and Sidu and escorted to their camp. Mahesh Dutta perhaps lost his nerve and admitted that he had come to arrest the brothers on a false charge. The two brothers said that if he had proof against them he may bind them. The

* An uncovenanted officer appointed by the East India Company as Superintendent of Santal Settlements in Damin-i-Koh, which later became the Santal perganas. Damin-i-Koh then included a portion of Birbhum.

foolhardy police officer then ordered his men to bind the brothers. No sooner was the order out of his mouth, than the whole mass of Santals fell upon him and his men and they were bound. After a hurried trial Sidu killed Mahesh Dutta with his own hands. From this date, 7 July 1855, the expedition took the character of an insurrection, and want drove the Santals to plunder. Palsa to the north of the district and Mrityunjaypur and Narayanpur to the north-west of Rampurhat were sacked and Suri was threatened. The Government at once despatched troops but the rains had set in rendering march difficult. Major Vincent Jervis was sent from Barrackpur to relieve Suri. The details of the battles between the Santal insurgents, an untrained band of people armed only with bows and arrows and some battle-axes and a trained military armed with fire-arms and led by able commanders, would be painful reading. In this unequal war-fare the Santals were soon defeated with severe loss of life and peace returned to the district by August 1855.

PRESENT INCIDENCE OF CRIMES

The total number of crimes reported in the district in 1872 was 3,356. The number of crimes reported was 4,528 in 1961 and 3,339 in 1962, 3,629 in 1963, 3,175 in 1965. Thus, after a lapse of 88 to 91 years the total number of crimes reported did not increase appreciably. In 1968, there was a sharp increase in the number of crimes reported and the number was 8,822 in that year. Almost all types of crimes increased during this year. But leaving out the figures of 1968 (which might have been due to extraneous causes like political uncertainty), the figures of the years from 1962 when compared with the figures of 1872 show that Birbhum was on the whole a peaceful district as regards criminal offences. Some of the principal offences and their incidence may be discussed.

Dacoity and robbery

The number of dacoities including robberies reported in 1961 and 1962 were 9 cases in each year. The number started rising from 1963 in which year there were 24 cases. In 1966, there were 36 cases. The number fell to 18 in 1967, but rose to 22 again in 1968. The figures do not show any pattern and these offences are sporadic.

Theft

Theft cases numbered 1,003 in 1961, 1,077 in 1964, 1,066 in 1966, but rose to 1,659 in 1967 and 2,515 in 1968. The lowest figure was 785 in 1965. The rise in the number of thefts during 1967 and 1968 is in consonance with the general increase in the number of crimes in these two years.

Rape

The number of cases of rape steadily rose from 1961 to 1968.

In 1961, there were only 2 cases, in 1962 there were 3 cases. In 1965, the number rose to 9 and in 1968 the figure was 25.

Offences against public tranquillity

The figures of offences against public tranquillity illustrate the general increase in lawlessness in the district during 1968. In 1961, there were 348 offences reported under this head. The figure varied between 200 in 1964 and 360 in 1966. In 1968, the number of offences under this head suddenly increased to 1,218.

Offences affecting life

Offences of murder and culpable homicide numbered 19 in 1961. The figure rose to 50 in 1964, but fell to 32 in 1966. In 1968, it again rose to 50.

POLICE ORGANISATION

The history of the gradual development of the police under the Government from 1765 to 1861 has been given in Chapter IX. In 1908, the district was divided into nine police thanas and five outposts as given below.[1]

Sub-division	Thanas	Outposts
Suri	1. Bolpur	Ilambazar
	2. Dubrajpur	Khayrasol
	3. Labhpur	
	4. Sakulipur	
	5. Suri	Mahammed Bazar Rajnagar Sainthia
Rampurhat	6. Mayureswar	
	7. Murarai	
	8. Nalhati	
	9. Rampurhat	

The regular police force in the district in 1908 consisted of one Superintendent of Police, 5 Inspectors, 28 Sub-Inspectors, 26 Head Constables, and 239 Constables. The total force, numbering 299 men, worked out at one police-man for 5.8 square miles of area and for 3,017 of the inhabitants of the district. The Rural Police consisted of 172 Dafadars and 2,561 Chaukidars. A large proportion of the Rural Police was remunerated by Chaukidari Chakran lands till these were resumed.[2]

[1] L. S. S. O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteers, Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910, p. 96.
[2] Vide, Chapter X.

The present police organisation in the district consists of a Superintendent of Police assisted by two Deputy Superintendents of Police for the Sadar Sub-division and one Deputy Superintendent of Police (styled the Sub-divisional Police Officer) for the Rampurhat Sub-division. The following table gives the distribution of Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors and Constables.

Police Station	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Asstt. Sub-Inspector	Constable
Suri	1	3	3	18
Rajnagar		1	1	8
Mahammad Bazar		1	1	8
Sainthia		2	2	10
Dubrajpur		3	2	12
Khayrasol		2	2	12
Ilambazar		2	2	12
Bolpur	1	3	4	12
Labhpur		1	1	8
Nanur		1	1	8
Mayureswar		3	2	12
Rampurhat	1	3	4	18
Nalhati		2	2	10
Murarai		2	2	10

Other personnel of the police force are given in the table below:

Placement	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Asstt. Sub-Inspector	Constable
Courts	1	6	10	19
D.I.B.	1	6.	8	39
D.E.B.	1	6	2	10
Reserve (casualty)	—	3	—	62
Indo-Pak Passport	—	3	2	5
Miscellaneous	—	6	1	26
Armed Police	1	2	—	173
Town Out-post	—	—	1	76
Cordoning	1	3	27	—
Anti-smuggling	1	25	—	36

Besides, there were 1 J.C.O. for town Out-Post, 26 Head Constables (1 for courts, 19 for Armed Police, 6 for Town Out-Post), 14 Naiks for Armed Police and 1 Constable for S.D.P.O.'s office, Rampurhat.

Govt. Railway Police

The sanctioned staff of the Government Railway Police in the district for the period from 1967-69 was as follows:

Place of Posting	Sub-Ins-pector	Asstt. Sub-Ins-pector	Head Constable	Constable
Sainthia G.R.P.S.	1	1	—	6
Sainthia Platform	--	—	—	4
Bolpur Platform	—	—	1	6
Nalhati Platform	—	—	1	3
Rampurhat Platform	--	—	1	3

The following is the yearwise statement of crimes reported under the jurisdiction of Sainthia Government Railway Police Station:

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Theft from wagons of running goods trains	27	24	6	10	2	3	1	8
Theft from wagons stacked in yards	1	1	7	1	1	1	7	8
Theft from passenger trains	23	15	13	14	4	7	13	14
Pick-pocketing	8	9	4	6	2	1	8	1
Theft from Rly. station platform, waiting-and bath-rooms, etc.	23	24	12	17	7	10	17	32
Rioting	1	2	8	—	2	1	5	5
Obstruction to passenger trains by passengers	—	—	—	—	—	1	9	—
Obstruction to goods trains by criminals	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Cheating	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Thefts from Rly. goods sheds	2	—	4	—	—	—	1	—

Besides, there were cases of dacoity, robbery, burglary and murder also. During the period from 1961 to 1968, the relevant figures were — 1 dacoity from goods train in 1962, 1 robbery from passenger train in 1964, 1 robbery from railway tracks in 1965 and 2 robberies from passenger trains in 1968; 1 burglary in 1962; 2 murders from railway jurisdiction in 1961, 1 murder from railway jurisdiction in 1964 and 1 murder from railway jurisdiction in 1967.

Quasi-police organisation

Home Guards

The organisation of the Home Guards was created in the wake of the Chinese aggression in 1962 for the purpose of keeping up the morale of the people in case of external aggression. The members of this organisation were given training in discipline, use of fire-arms, civil defence works such as rescue, first-aid and fire-fighting. Some selected members were given training in map reading, handling of automatic weapons operation of Wireless sets, etc. In case of need the Home Guards were to act as auxiliary to the police and generally help in maintaining internal security and render assistance to the people in cases of air raids, fire havocs, etc. They were also to perform, if called upon, tasks in connection with the maintenance of essential services like transport, fire-service, water supply and power installations. The following is a thanawise distribution of Home Guards as it stood on 31 March 1969.

HOME GUARDS

Police Station	Rural	Urban
Suri	151	113
Rajnagar	58	—
Mahammad Bazar	41	—
Sainthia	165	—
Dubrajpur	114	—
Khayrasol	73	—
Ilambazar	79	54
Bolpur	78	54
Labhpur	117	—
Nanur	114	—
Mayureswar	117	—
Rampurhat	179	84
Nalhati	145	—
Murarai	140	—

National Volunteer Force

The National Volunteer Force is an organisation with personnel recruited from the local people, who volunteer their service on a part-time basis. The National Volunteer Force in the district as on 31 March 1969 was headed by an Assistant Company Commander. He has under him five platoons of Volunteer Force, the details of which are given below:

	Platoon No. with Head quarters	Jurisdiction	Strength
1.	Suri	Suri, Dubrajpur, Ilambazar, Mahammad Bazar, Rajnagar, Bolpur and part of Sainthia Police Station	49
2.	Kirnahar	Kirnahar, Nanur and part of Bolpur police station	61
3.	Labhpur	Labhpur	49
4	Rampurhat	Rampurhat, Mayureswar	63
5	Nalhati	Nalhati, Murarai, Lohapur	56

The members of the force were mainly called for food cordoning operation. They were also employed for some emergencies, loan collection and election.

Excise Administration

For the purpose of excise administration, there is only one range in the district, divided into seven circles with headquarters at Suri, Bolpur, Dubrajpur, Labhpur, Rampurhat, Sainthia and Nalhati.

The District Collector is the head of the exise administration. He is assisted by a Superintendent of Excise. Besides, there is an Inspector of Excise, 10 Sub-Inspectors of Excise, 4 Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Excise and 49 Constables. The following table would indicate the number of licences issued in the district.

NO. OF EXCISE LICENCES ISSUED IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-68

Name of Excise articles for the sale of which licences were issued	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
PACHWAI	237	237	237	237	237	237	237	237
G. S.	25	25	31	31	31	31	30	30
Ganja	32	32	29	29	29	29	29	29
Bhang	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
F. L.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tari	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16

There is no area under prohibition within the State. But the excise and opium shops are to be kept closed on the Independence Day, Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Day, the Republic Day and Mahashtami Day. The licensees of these shops have also the option to keep their shops closed on these days: Netaji's Birthday, Rathajatra, Janmashtami, Saraswati Puja, Ramnavami, Id-ul-Fitr, Bakr-Id, Fateha-Duaz-Doham, Muharram, Jagaddhatri Puja, and the First of Baisakh.

ORGANISATION OF THE CRIMINAL COURTS

A history of the development and organisation of the courts for Criminal justice has been given in Chapter IX. There has been a separation of the executive and judicial work in the district from 18 June 1971. On the executive side, the District Magistrate heads the Magistracy. A Deputy Magistrate with powers of a Magistrate of the First Class is the Sub-divisional Magistrate for the Sadar Sub-division, while another Deputy Magistrate with first class powers is posted as Additional Sub-divisional Magistrate at Bolpur. There are two Sub-Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at Suri for the Sadar Sub-division. At Rampurhat a Deputy Magistrate with first class powers is the Sub-divisional Magistrate with one Sub-Deputy Magistrate with second class powers and one Sub-Deputy Magistrate with third class powers to assist.

The judicial side of the Criminal administration is headed by the Sessions Judge with an Additional Sessions Judge. There is a Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate at Suri for the Sadar Sub-division with another Judicial Magistrate. One Judicial Magistrate is stationed at Bolpur. At Rampurhat, there is one Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate with another Judicial Magistrate.

The number and nature of cases handled has been briefly discussed in the foregoing section. The details appear in the statement in the Appendix to the Chapter.

Panchayat Adalat

No Panchayat Adalat has yet started functioning in the district.

ORGANISATION OF THE CIVIL COURTS

The entire district constitutes one Judgeship headed by a District Judge stationed at Suri the head-quarters of the district. There is an Additional District Judge, also stationed at Suri, with identical powers and jurisdiction. Besides, there is one Subordinate Judge and a Munsif and an Additional Munsif all stationed at Suri. The Subordinate Judge is empowered to try Small Causes Court suits of the value up to Rs. 750/- and to

try money and other suits of unlimited value over Rs. 5,000/- arising within the Sadar Munsifi, Dabrajpur Munsifi and Rampurhat Munsifi and over Rs. 7,500/- arising within the Bolpur Munsifi. The senior Munsif at Suri is empowered to try suits up to the value of Rs. 5,000/- and the Additional Munsif exercises identical powers None of the Munsifs at Suri has been vested with powers to try Small Causes Court suits.

At Bolpur, there are two Munsifs. The senior Munsif at Bolpur is empowered to try suits up to the value of Rs. 7,500/- and to try Small Causes Court suits up to the value of Rs 300/- The junior Munsif of Bolpur is empowered to try suits up to the value of Rs. 5,000/- but is not empowered to try Small Causes Court suits. One Munsif is posted at Dubrajpur and is empowered to try suits up to the value of Rs. 5,000/- but is not empowered to try Small Causes Court suits.

There are two Munsifs at Rampurhat. The senior Munsif is empowered to try suits up to the value of Rs. 5,000/- and to try Small Causes Court suits up to the value of Rs. 300/-. The junior Munsif of Rampurhat is empowered to try suits up to the value of Rs. 5,000/- but is not empowered to try Small Causes Court suits.

The District Judge and the Additional District Judge also act as Sessions Judge and Additional Sessions Judge respectively. The subordinate Judge acts as Assistant Sessions Judge.

JAILS AND LOCK-UPS

There are two jails in the district, the District Jail at Suri and the Sub-jail at Rampurhat. The accommodation of the District Jail is for 288 prisoners, while the Sub-jail at Rampurhat has accommodation for 18 prisoners.

The District Jail is under a Superintendent. Besides, there are 1 Jailor, 1 Deputy Jailor, 1 Medical Officer, 1 Compounder, 3 Male Nurses, 1 Teacher, 4 Head Warders, 48 Male Warders and 1 Female Warder The Sub-divisional Officer of Rampurhat is the ex-officio Superintendent of the Sub-jail. Besides, there is 1 Sub-jailor, 2 Head Warders and 6 Warders.

The Sub-jail does not keep any convicted person suffering imprisonment for more than a month. These prisoners are sent to the District Jail after conviction. The Sub-jail is essentially a lock-up for undertrial prisoners. Convicts are only kept here in cases where the convict is under trial in some other case in Rampurhat court. No juvenile prisoner nor any political prisoner is kept in the Sub-jail. In the District Jail also political prisoners

and juvenile delinquents are not ordinarily kept, but are transferred to Special Jails under orders of the Government.

The important reforms introduced in the prison administration and discipline at Suri are as follows:

1. Compulsory adult education has been introduced. There are paid teachers for the purpose and convict teachers, when available, also assist.
2. Convicts get wages for the labour they perform under the Wages System introduced in the Jail.
3. Stripes in the Jail dress has been abolished and the obligation to wear the identity disc has been done away with.
4. The previous practice of clipping the hair short has been discontinued.
5. A library has been provided for the use of the prisoners.
6. A Radio set is provided in the Tuberculosis ward of the Jail and a separate library has been provided in this ward.
7. Prisoners are allowed the facility of taking part in Bratachari dance and other cultural functions.
8. Prisoners addicted to smoking are allowed to smoke at their own cost (labour wages earned) up to a limited extent.
9. Hand fans are provided to all categories of prisoners in summer.
10. Well-behaved prisoners are allowed to play on musical instruments on Sundays and Jail-holidays.
11. Prisoners willing to appear in examinations held by the Board of Secondary Education or Universities are allowed the facilities for prosecuting their studies and appearing at the examinations.
12. Improved facilities have been given for interview with relatives and for writing letters.

In the Sub-jail at Rampurhat all the above facilities are given, except items 1, 5, 6, 7 and 11.

There are non-official visitors for both the District Jail and the Sub-jail.

APPENDIX A

Offences reported, dismissed, returned as true and brougt to trial and the persons involved can broadly be classified in three categories (i) offences under Indian Penal Code, (ii) offences relating to food, (iii) offences under special laws and local laws.

OFFENCES UNDER INDIAN PENAL CODE

	1961	1962	1963	1965	1966	1967	1968
(A)							
Number of Cases:							
1. Offences reported	4.528	3.539	3,629	3.175	3.908	5.088	8.822
2. Dismissed under Section 203, Criminal procedure Code	664	445	370	220	417	435	582
3. Returned as true	3.865	3,094	3,259	2.955	3.491	4.653	7,640
4. Brought to trial	2,747	1.998	2,505	2.485	2.110	3.019	4.480
(B)							
Number of Persons:							
5. Under trial including pending from previous year	7.501	7.251	9.723				

6. Acquitted or discharged	4,777	3,518	5,431	5459	6,134	5,008	5,655
7. Convicted	708	741	1,702	595	749	807	1,494
8. Died, escaped or transferred to another State	2		1				
9. Remaining under trial	2,014	2,992	2,589	3,865	4.050	6,352	10,876
(C) Before trial	2,565	1,858	3,191	3,126	3.972	3,331	4.649
(D) After trial	2,212	1.660	2.240	2,333	2.162	1.677	1.106

OFFENCES RELATING TO FOOD

(A) *Number of Cases :*							
1. Offences reported	134	375	370	195	144	113	
2. Dismissed under Section 203, criminal procedure Code							
3. Returned as true	134	375	370	195	144	113	
4. Brought to trial	120	363	355	195	134	113	

APPENDIX A (*Contd.*)

	1961	1962	1963	1965	1966	1967	1968
(B)							
Number of Persons :							
5. Under trial including pending from previous year	134	377	370	202	199	173	
6. Acquitted or discharged	7	23	13	5	7	36	
7. Convicted	113	340	340	187	121	89	
8. Died, escaped or transferred to another State							
9. Remaining under trial	14	14	15	10	71	48	
(C)							
Before trial							
(D)							
After trial	7	23	13	5	2	36	

OFFENCES UNDER SPECIAL AND LOCAL LAWS

	1961	1962	1963	1965	1966	1967	1968
(A)							
Number of Cases :							
1. Offences reported	1,516	1,948	2,888	2,100	2,911	3,245	3,516

2. Dismissed under Section 203, Criminal procedure Code				2			
3. Returned as true	1.516	1.948	2.888	2.098	2.911	3,245	3,516
4. Brought to trial	1.388	1.757	2.650	1.989	2,770	3.238	2.908
(B)							
Number of Persons :							
5. Under trial including pending from previous year	2.439	2.765	3.402	3.009	4.262	4.852	5.193
6. Acquitted or dicharged	626	637	485	586	628	857	581
7. Convicted	1.499	1.754	2.334	1.517	2.282	2.347	3.068
8. Died, escaped or transferred to another State							
9. Remaining under trial	314	374	583	906	1.352	1.648	1,549
(C)				194	282	471	89
Before trial		385	98				
(D)				392	246	386	492
After trial	451	252	387				

APPENDIX B

MAJOR OFFENCES

Year	Offences reported	Dismissed under section 203, criminal procedure Code	Returned as true	Brought to trial
Against the public tranquillity (Chapter VIII)				
1961	348	30	318	214
1962	291	10	281	153
1963	278	13	265	221
1964	200	3	197	146
1965	280	12	268	244
1966	360	—	306	164
1967	254	12	242	142
1968	1218	15	1203	455
Contempts of the lawful authority of public servants (Chapter X)				
1961	47	—	47	47
1962	23	-	23	17
1963	—	-	—	—
1964	41		41	36
1965	59		59	59
1966	68	--	68	50
1967	47		47	47
1968	47	-	47	—
Affecting the public health, safety, convenience, decency and morals (Chapter XIV)				
1961	6	-	6	6
1962	36	—	36	32
1963	41	—	41	41
1964	41	—	41	38
1965	21	—	21	21
1966	29	—	29	29
1967	72	—	72	72
1968	27	—	27	26

APPENDIX B (*Contd.*)

Year	*Offences reported*	*Dismissed under section 203, criminal procedure Code*	*Returned as true*	*Brought to trial*
		Affecting Life		
1961	19	·	19	17
1962	22	—	22	19
1963	31	—	31	20
1964	50	—	50	34
1965	48	1	47	45
1966	32	2	30	24
1967	43	—	43	43
1968	50	1	49	49
		Hurt		
1961	1.215	102	1,113	717
1962	1.095	201	894	581
1963	776	187	589	415
1964	1,003	79	924	664
1965	812	50	762	674
1966	1,029	80	949	312
1967	1.541	101	1.440	765
1968	2.094	131	1.963	925
		Wrongful restraint and wrongful confinement		
1961	54	20	34	20
1962	78	9	69	23
1963	61	10	51	45
1964	39	4	35	20
1965	77	7	70	58
1966	91	6	85	63
1967	47	9	38	38
1968	186	14	172	158
		Criminal force and assault		
1961	205	24	181	107
1962	217	17	200	97

APPENDIX B (*Contd.*)

Year	*Offences reported*	*Dismissed under section 203, criminal procedure Code*	*Returned as true*	*Brought to trial*
1963	205	13	192	171
1964	52	9	43	30
1965	35	5	30	27
1966	129	22	107	70
1967	101	25	75	75
1968	195	23	172	150
		Kidnapping, forcible abduction, slavery and forced labour		
1961	3	—	3	3
1962	1	—	1	1
1963	5	-	5	3
1964	12	2	10	5
1965	19	1	18	14
1966	18	—	18	6
1967	24	—	24	24
1968	35	3	32	20
		Rape		
1961	2	—	2	2
1962	3	—	3	3
1963	4	—	4	4
1964	7	—	7	7
1965	9	—	9	9
1966	5	—	5	4
1967	9	1	8	8
1968	25	—	25	13
		Theft		
1961	1,003	231	772	443
1962	907	84	823	500
1963	928	72	856	691
1964	1,077	45	1,032	781
1965	785	48	737	447
1966	1,066	151	915	534

APPENDIX B (*Contd.*)

Year	*Offences reported*	*Dismissed under section 203, criminal procedure Code*	*Returned as true*	*Brought to trial*
1967	1,659	113	1,546	922
1968	2,515	226	2,289	1,131
		Robbery and dacoity		
1961	9	—	9	9
1962	9	1	8	7
1963	24	—	24	16
1964	26	1	25	18
1965	30	1	29	26
1966	36	1	35	20
1967	18	1	17	17
1968	22	—	22	22
		Criminal misappropriation		
1961	36	10	26	24
1962	16	7	9	8
1963	20	2	18	15
1964	26	5	21	14
1965	18	6	12	12
1966	26	5	21	19
1967	128	6	122	72
1968	115	1	114	113
		Criminal breach of trust		
1961	63	21	42	40
1962	55	2	53	47
1963	78	3	75	45
1964	58	5	53	32
1965	24	—	24	24
1966	57	5	52	23
1967	69	24	45	45
1968	170	10	160	149

APPENDIX B (*Contd.*)

Year	*Offences reported*	*Dismissed under section 203, criminal procedure Code*	*Returned as true*	*Brought to trial*
		Receiving stolen property		
1961	36	--	36	30
1962	47	—	47	38
1963	61	2	59	50
1964	55	—	55	42
1965	44	—	44	44
1966	49	---	49	41
1967	42	—	42	42
1968	88	-	88	77
		Cheating		
1961	141	20	121	108
1962	137	17	120	115
1963	107	11	96	65
1964	60	7	53	37
1965	77	6	71	69
1966	104	6	98	69
1967	71	12	59	59
1968	205	24	181	169
		Mischief		
1961	318	27	292	217
1962	132	36	96	64
1963	140	25	115	103
1964	193	20	173	141
1965	211	23	188	168
1966	187	25	162	131
1967	384	42	342	242
1968	488	36	452	442
		Criminal tresspass		
1961	266	31	235	210
1962	201	15	186	118

APPENDIX B (*Contd.*)

Year	*Offences reported*	*Dismissed under section 203, criminal procedure Code*	*Returned as true*	*Brought to trial*
1963	358	9	349	289
1964	267	12	255	227
1965	256	22	234	214
1966	154	40	114	139
1967	135	26	109	109
1968	382	7	375	286
		Relating to documents and trade or property marks		
1961	3	—	3	3
1962	3	—	3	2
1963	1	—	1	1
1964	—	—	—	—
1965	5	2	3	3
1966	1	—	1	1
1967	5	—	5	5
1968	15	—	15	13
		Relating to marriage		
1961	147	4	143	137
1962	54	6	48	25
1963	60	5	55	40
1964	43	3	40	23
1965	29	—	29	29
1966	75	11	64	58
1967	60	7	53	53
1968	57	5	52	33
		Criminal intimidation, insult and annoyance		
1961	498	137	361	297
1962	132	37	95	78
1963	205	18	187	90
1964	229	50	279	219
1965	201	26	175	175
1966	386	58	328	305
1967	341	52	289	204
1968	272	86	186	186

CHAPTER XII

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

HISTORY OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE DISTRICT

The introduction of local self-government in the district took place during the British rule. With transfer of administrative responsibility from the East India Company to the Crown in 1858, the Government passed Act III of 1864 to reduce municipal administration to a system. The Suri Municipality was brought into being in the year 1876 under the ex-officio chairmanship of the District Officer. The District Road Cess Act of 1871 left room for the setting up of a District Board which was constituted under the Bengal Act III of 1885. Under the provisions of Bengal Act V of 1919 Union Boards came into being for the performance of local services and proper maintenance of the rural police. After independence, the Bolpur municipality was established in 1950 and under the provisions of West Bengal Act I of 1957 and West Bengal Act XXV of 1963 people of the district have banded themselves into Gram Panchayats, Anchal Panchayats, Anchalik Parishads and the Zilla Parishad

MUNICIPALITIES

The following table furnishes important particulars of the three municipalities functioning in the district:

	Suri	*Bolpur*	*Rampurhat*
Date of establishment	1876	1950	1950
Area in sq. miles	3.66	5.07	1.97
Annual rateable value	—	1,28,059	·
No. of holdings	4670	5256	
Population	22,864	23,361	19,572
No. of rate payers	4,175	5,256	3,173

The last municipal election was held in 1967 on the basis of adult suffrage. Area of the municipalities were divided into a number of wards, each ward electing a Commissioner. Suri and Bolpur had 14 Commissioners each. While the appointment of an Education Committee is mandatory under Section 456 of the Act, the Commissioners usually appoint other Standing Committees as well for efficient transaction of business. The

Suri Municipality had during 1968-69 four such Standing Committees, namely, Finance, Public Works, Sanitation & Public Health and Market Advisory; while Bolpur had Committees on Lighting, Public Works, Public Health & Sanitation and Finance.

The Suri Municipality maintained 87 persons along with one tractor with two trailers for the transportation of night soils. The Bolpur Municipality maintained 43 persons for the same purpose along with 38 tubs.

The two municipalities below also served notices for removing insanitary privies, improving inefficient privies, for making privies, removing insanitary tanks, draining or levelling of low lands, making sanitary latrines and for removing water hyacinth; the relevant figures for which valid for 1968-69 are given below:

Notices served for	*Suri*	*Bolpur*
Removing insanitary privies	4	4
Improving inefficient privies	4	—
Making privies	—	—
Making sanitary latrines	18	—
Removing Insanitary tanks	1	—
Draining or levelling of low lands	1	—
Removing water hyacinth	1	—

The said municipalities also look after proper maintenance of markets, restaurants and shops. While Suri and Bolpur had one market each within their respective municipal limits, Suri had 1,075 shops and restaurants and Bolpur had 900 of such establishments. The following table gives the quantity of items destroyed as unfit for human consumption during inspection in 1968-69.

Item destroyed	*Suri*	*Bolpur*
Fish	50 Kg.	35 Kg.
Meat	20 „	—
Sweets	30 „	—
Flour	32 „	—
Vegetables	75 „	—

The Suri Municipality maintained 19 Coolies and 15 Sweepers for cleaning of the drains and sweeping of the roads respectively. The organization had three trucks and two bullock carts for the disposal of refuse, while hand-carts were used for the removal of carcasses. The Bolpur municipality maintained 42 persons for the above purposes. While the Suri municipality maintained a number of public latrines and privies, Bolpur had none to maintain.

The table below would give an idea of the water supply arrangements of the Suri municipality for 1968-69.

Total installed capacity of filtered water	..	1,32,000 gallons
Number of house connection provided	..	400
Average daily supply of filtered water in gallons to municipal population	..	3,00,000
Average daily supply of filtered water in gallons to house connections	..	13,000

The Bolpur municipality maintained 44 tubewells below a diameter of 5 inches and the average daily supply of water from them was 400 gallons Besides, the municipality maintained some street hydrants, the source of supply being deep tubewells. The municipality will very shortly provide for house connections. The Public Health Engineering Directorate of the Government of West Bengal has since completed the Bolpur Water Supply Scheme at the revised estimated cost of Rs. 13,19,200 to provide supply at the rate of 15 G.P.C.D. for a population of 25,000. The source of supply is tube-wells. The same Directorate completed a scheme in 1961 at the cost of Rs. 4.5 lakhs to augment water supply at Suri. The Directorate had taken up another scheme in 1965 at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,27,300. Even then the per capita supply was insufficient and unsatisfactory. That is why the Directorate has taken up two more schemes – one interim amounting to Rs. 2,81,000 and another comprehensive amounting to Rs. 10,95,000. At Rampurhat, water supply is solely dependent on a few 1½" dia. spot tubewells, which hopelessly fail to cater to the required supply for municipal population. The Directorate has undertaken the preparation of schemes for supplying potable water to the municipal population of Rampurhat.

The length of the drains maintained by two municipalities during 1968-69 is given in the table below:

	Suri	*Bolpur*
Total length of drains (km.)	44	54
Length of *pucca* drains (km.)	24	14
„ „ *kutcha* „ „	20	40

The following table would give the figures relating to the roads maintained by the municipalities for 1968-69.

	Suri	*Bolpur*	*Rampurhat*
Total length of roads (km)	43.18	30.5	17.6
Length of metalled roads (km.)	43.18	12.5	4.8
„ „ unmetalled „ „	—	18.0	11.2

In the field of public health services, the municipalities rendered no other service but primary vaccination, revaccination and inoculation, the figures of which for 1968-69 are given below (in respet of two municipalities):

	Suri	*Bolpur*
Primary vaccination	232	481
Re-vaccination	8147	7292
Inoculation	—	765

For public safety, Suri and Bolpur municipalities provided 337 and 520 electric street lights respectively, the source of power supply being in either case the State Electricity Board. While the Suri municipality had withdrawn the Kerosene street lights, Bolpur still maintained 109 of them.

The Suri Municipality maintained, during 1968-69, 1 pre-primary, 1 primary and 2 Junior basic schools. The Bolpur municipality during the said year maintained 8 Junior basic schools. Besides, Suri gave aid to some other institutions and 4 libraries as well.

The Suri municipality had 7 departments, such as, General, Collection, Sanitary, Licence, Public Works, Water Works and Market. The General Department was manned by 5 Clerks and

2 Peons during 1968-69; the Cellection Department by 6 Clerks, 5 Collecting Sarkars and Peons, the Sanitation Department by 6 Supervisors, 4 Drivers, 37 Coolies for road cleaning, 16 Coolies for drainage, 53 Coolies for private privies, 16 Coolies for road watering, 1 Sanitary Inspector, 1 Asstt. Sanitary Inspector, 1 Health Assistant, 2 Vaccinators, 1 Peon; the Licence Department by 1 Inspector and 2 Peons; the Public Works Department by 1 Overseer; the Water Works Department by 1 Superintendent, 2 Drivers, 5 Wiremen, 2 Pipeline Mistries, 1 Peon, 1 Night Guard, 1 Meter Reader; the Market Department by 1 Superintendent, 4 Toll Collectors, 1 Peon and 1 Guard. The Bolpur municipality had 5 Departments, namely, Public Health & Sanitation (with water supply), Public Works Department, Collection Department (including Licence Department), Education Department and General Administration. The Public Health & Sanitation Department was headed by a Sanitary Inspector & Food Inspector; the Public Works Department by a Sub-Asstt. Engineer; the Collection Department by a Tax Daroga; the General Administration which also looks after the Education Department was headed by a Head Clerk. Besides, each department was manned by different persons of various categories, such as, Public Health and Sanitation by 1 Sanitary Inspector, 2 Health Assistants, 4 Supervisors, 1 Driver, 1 Cleaner, 1 Tubewell Mistry, 1 Assistant to the Mistry; the Public Works Department by 1 Sub-Assistant Engineer, 1 Sub-Overseer and 4 Coolies; the Collection Department by 3 Clerks, 1 Licence Inspector, 4 Tax Collectors and 3 Peons; the Education Department by 59 Teachers, 1 Head Clerk, 11 Assistant Clerks, 1 Cashier, 1 Peon, 1 Watchman and 4 School Servants. If the number of letters received and issued by at least two municipalities are any indication of other respective volume of business, the following table would give the same:

	Letters received	*Letters issued*
Suri	2625	615
Bolpur	574	842

The following table would indicate the sourcewise income of the municipalities for the year noted against each.

	Suri 1968-69	*Bolpur* 1971-72	*Rampurhat* 1971-72
Rates & Taxes	2,58,846.39	2,07,073.86	1,73,370.43
Realisation under special Acts	2,932.00	4,481.44	645.00
Revenue derived from Municipal property and Powers apart from Taxation	49,349.48	18,589.00	11,643.07
Government Grants	1,42,111.17	3,62,076.00	1,56,944.22
Miscellaneous	2,749.05	4,910.00	3,193.36
Extraordinary	84,300.15	3,19,033.00	1,12,963.39
Total receipts	5,40,288.24	9,16,814.30	4,94,779.91

The heads of expenditure and the corresponding amount spent by each are given in the table below:

Head of expenditure	*Suri* 1968-69	*Bolpur* 1971-72	*Rampurhat* 1971-72
General Administration and collection charges	51,204.93	72,027.00	54,004.76
Public Safety	14,652.77	24,804.00	14,230.00
Public Health and convenience	3,49,740.07	2,64,771.51	2,37,550.42
Public Instruction	20,803.04	1,22,229.00	33,859.67
Miscellaneous	15,096.76	—	17,947.87
Extraordinary and Debt	57,290.10	—	95,646.03
Total	5,08,787.67	9,16,814.30	4,94,779.91

ZILLA PARISHAD

In 1967-68, the Birbhum Zilla Parishad had 44 members, of whom 43 were men and 1 woman. Four of the members were Muslims, four belonged to the Scheduled Castes and one to the Scheduled Tribes. There were 7 Standing Committees, particulars of which are given in the table below:

Name of the Standing Committee	*No. of meetings*	*No. of members*	*Average attendance*
Finance & Establishment	5	10	7
Public Health	3	12	7
Public Works	3	11	8
Agriculture & Irrigation	2	16	11
Industry & Co-operation	—	12	—
Public & Social Welfare	4	12	7
Primary Education: General	6	15	6
Primary Education: Special	2	15	8

The above standing Committees, dealt with specific subjects which are indicated in the following table:

Name of the Standing Committee	*Subjects dealt with*
Finance and Establishment	Finance, budget, taxation, administration, establishment, planning, co-ordination and supervision.
Public Health	Public health, sanitation, nutrition, rural water, dispensaries, hospitals, family planning.
Public Works	Roads, bridges, culverts, construction and maintenance of public buildings, works and properties, rural housing.
Agriculture & Irrigation	Agriculture, food production, irrigation, forests, fisheries, animal husbandry, poultry, veterinary services.
Industry & Co-operation	Marketing, warehousing, food processing, co-operative societies, rural credit, small savings, cottage industries.
Public & Social Welfare	Social education, recreation, social welfare including welfare of women, children and backward communities, tribal welfare, adult education, information and mass communication, publicity and statistics.

Appointed by the State Government, the Executive Officer, a member of the West Bengal Civil Service, runs the administration of the Parishad and he secures co-ordination between the

Parishad, its Standing Committees and the district level officers. The complements of personnel under him for 1967-68 are given in the table below:

Name of the Post	*Scale of pay* Rs.	*No. of staff*
Executive Officer, W.B.C.S.	325-35-1000	1
Office Superintendent-cum-Head Accountant	300-20-400-25-450	1
Asstt. Accountant-cum-Cashier	200-10-300	1
Head Assistant (Vacant)	250-15-400	1
Upper Division Clerk (Vacant)	200-10-300	1
Lower Division Clerk	125-3-140-4-200	9
Steno-Typist	175-7-245-8-325	1
Office Peons & Orderlies	60-½-75	13
Motor Driver	100-3-136-4-140	1
Medical Officer	200-10-400	10
Dressers & Compounders	50-2-100	10
Servants of dispensaries	20-2-45	10
Night Guards & Sweepers	20.00 each (Retaining fee)	12

Besides, the District Engineer headed the technical wing of the Parishad with the following personnel.

DISTRICT ENGINEER'S OFFICE UNDER ZILLA PARISHAD

Name of the post	*Scale of pay* Rs.	*No. of staff*
District Engineer	700-50-60-1350*	1
Overseers	200-10-400	3
Sub-overseers	175-7-245-8-325	1
Surveyor	— do —	1
Draftsman	— do —	1
Assistant Surveyor	100-3-136-4-140	1
Road Sarkars	— do —	8
Bungalow Chowkidars	30-1-50-2-60	4
— do —	20-1-45	11
Sweepers (Retaining fee)	20/- each & 1 @ 25/-	9
Arboriculture Mali	30-1-65	2
Overseers' Peons	35-1-45	4

*Not yet approved by Government and sub-judice.

The income and expenditure of the Parishad for 1967-68 are shown in the following table:

Heads of Income	Amount	Heads of expenditure	Amount
	Rs.		Rs.
Opening balance		*Establishment*:	
For Specific Schemes	3,79,615.00	Salaries and allowances of personnel	2,00,164.00
Untied funds	2,51,602.00	T.A. of personnel	6,644.00
Grants and contribution made by the Central/State Govt. U/S/-40 (1) (a):		T.A. to the members of Z.P. (including Chairman and Vice-Chairman)	11,855.00
Land Revenue	1,37,050.00	Office charges	7,768.00
Augmentation	24,658.00	Allotment to Anchalik Parishads U/S 18 (1) (b)	2,501.00
Subvention for D.A. to the employees	22.028.00	To undertake Schemes U/S 18 (1) (a) (i)	3,73,940.00
Other Relief, if any	15,000.00	To manage Public Utility services and institution U/S 18 (1) (a) (iii)	27,781.00
Grants for specific schemes other than Relief	18,400.00	—	—
Other Govt. grants	9.600.00	To make grants to Public institutions U/S 18 (1) (a) (iv)	1,456.00
		To establish scholarship and awards U/S 18 (1) (a) (vi)	2,050.00
Proceeds of Road Cess U/S (1) (d)	1,33,756.00	To adopt measure for relief U/S 18 (1) (a) (vii)	27,398.00
Receipts from Toll rates etc. U/S 40 (1) (e)	6,316.00	Other expenditure U/S 44 (a) (b) (c)	43,541.00
		Total Expenditure	8,29,541.00

Heads of Income	Amount Rs.	Heads of expenditure	Amount Rs.
Closing balance			
Receipts from institution U/S 40 (1) (f)	1,686.00	For Specific Schemes	2,30,256.00
All other receipts recovered by or on behalf of the Z.P.	59,996.00	Refund of G.R. & T.R. Debts	
Total Receipts	4,28,490.00	Deposits Advance G.R. & T.R. Refund	1,24,353.00
Total Income (including balance)	10,59,707.00	—	—

ANCHALIK PARISHAD

The district had 19 Anchalik Parishads during 1967-68, the composition of each of which is given in the table below:

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Area in sq. miles	Total population	No. of members
Mahammad Bazar	120.67	66,701	33
Sainthia	121.05	1,04.779	36
Bolpur-Sriniketan	122.28	81,415	28
Labhpur	103.89	91,655	25
Nanur	120.04	98,681	26
Dubrajpur	138.75	97,125	32
Ilambazar	100.94	68,201	27
Rajnagar	82.00	42,145	18
Suri I	60.66	44,216	20
Suri II	52.30	38,920	20
Khayrasol	106.00	78,183	29
Nalhati I	96.09	91,703	27
Nalhati II	35.39	46,709	17
Murarai I	65.22	64,830	25
Murarai II	71.21	74,746	23
Mayureswar I	86.00	71,812	41
Mayureswar II	61.86	57,920	23
Rampurhat I	111.00	77,211	27
Rampurhat II	71.56	77,809	21

The following table would indicate the sex composition and community distribution of the members of each Parishad.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Sex Composition Male	Female	Community Distribution Hindu (including S.C. & S.T.)	Muslim	S.C. only	S.T. only
Mahammad Bazar	31	2	28	5	3	2
Sainthia	34	2	34	2	6	—
Bolpur-Sriniketan	26	2	25	3	3	1
Labhpur	23	2	23	2	2	—
Nanur	25	1	21	5	2	—
Dubrajpur	29	3	28	4	2	—
Ilambazar	25	2	15	12	1	1
Rajnagar	25	2	16	2	4	1
Suri I	16	2	18	2	2	—
Suri II	18	2	14	6	2	1
Khayrasol	27	2	27	2	4	—
Nalhati I	25	2	22	5	4	—
Nalhati II	15	2	12	5	5	—
Murarai I	23	2	15	10	3	1
Murarai II	21	2	9	14	2	—
Mayureswar I	39	2	34	7	5	1
Mayureswar II	21	2	21	2	2	—
Rampurhat I	24	3	22	5	2	—
Rampurhat II	19	2	15	6	3	—

The figures for the Hindu membership include those of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who have also been shown separately.

Each Anchalik Parishad functioned during the year through several Standing Committees, the particulars of which are furnished in the table in Appendix A.

Each Anchalik Parishad maintained a fund to which were credited grants from Panchayat Department, receipts from the Zilla Parishad and receipts on account of tolls, rates and fees levied by it and from this fund the Parishad incurred its diverse expenditure. The two tables in Appendices B and C would indicate the patterns of income and expenditure of the Parishads for 1967-68.

Anchal Panchayats

The following table indicates the Anchalik Parishadwise number of Anchal Panchayats along with the figures relating to the population covered by them, number of householders in them and the number of tax, rates and fees payers for 1967-68.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	No. of Anchal Pan-chayats	Popula-tion covered by the A.P.	No. of house holder in the A.P.	Number of Tax, Rates and Fees payers: Under section 57 (1) (a)	Under section 57 (1) (b)	Under section 57 (2)	Total
Mahammad Bazar	12	66,701	14,197	12,664	996	3,424	17,084
Sainthia	13	1,04,779	19,957	17,430	3,567	4,404	25,403
Bolpur-Sriniketan	9	81,415	15,124	15,040	2,304	4,125	21,469
Labhpur	9	91,655	20,704	13,581	5,018	4,918	23,517
Nanur	9	98,681	18,572	15,299	2,187	3,873	21,359
Dubrajpur	11	97,125	18,651	18,651	3,089	3,306	25,046
Ilambazar	9	68,201	16,830	15,371	776	3,479	19,626
Rajnagar	5	42,145	9,432	8,819	584	2,643	12,046
Suri I	7	44,216	9,322	7,256	2,375	3,650	13,281
Suri II	6	38,920	7,377	6,041	2,037	2,856	10,934
Khayrasol	10	78,183	15,954	15,877	914	4,123	20,914
Nalhati I	9	91,703	17,796	17,341	6,922	5,743	30,006
Nalhati II	4	46,709	9,379	9,379	1,000	2,515	12,894
Murarai I	7	64,830	12,967	10,634	6,517	3,053	20,204
Murarai II	7	74,746	22,158	22,114	6,068	4,161	32,343
Mayureswar I	8	71,812	15,953	13,616	1,162	3,809	18,587
Mayureswar II	7	55,135	11,450	10,790	609	3,127	14,526
Rampurhat I	9	77,211	15,400	14,299	922	4,446	19,667
Rampurhat II	7	77,809	17,497	16,499	5,015	4,168	25,682
Total	158	13,71,976	2,88,720	2,60,701	52,064	71,823	3,84,588

The total number of members of the Anchal Panchayats as also their number of meetings and average attendance would be evident from the following table:

Total No. of members of the Anchal Panchayats	No. of meetings	Average attendance
153	116	12
209	186	8
183	76	14
183	86	15
239	89	11
176	93	15
126	86	8

Total No. of members of the Anchal Panchayats	No. of meetings	Average attendance
74	23	8
123	56	7
116	60	11
154	72	9
205	85	10
92	59	12
147	63	9
161	78	10
201	80	15
126	56	7
186	108	12
201	63	8
3,055	1,517	201

The sex composition and community distribution of the membership of the Anchal Panchayats are given in the table below:

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Sex composition		Community Distribution				
	Men	Women	Hindu (including S.C.S.T.)	Muslims	Others	Sch. castes	Sch. tribes
Mahammad Bazar	153	—	119	34	—	10	10
Sainthia	208	1	179	30	—	12	2
Bolpur-Sriniketan	183	—	151	32	—	15	1
Labhpur	182	1	149	34	—	4	1
Nanur	238	1	182	57	—	15	—
Dubrajpur	175	1	131	45	—	7	—
Ilambazar	125	1	62	64	—	12	3
Rajnagar	74	—	64	10	—	9	2
Suri I	123	—	94	29	—	6	1
Suri II	116	—	79	37	—	6	1
Khayrasol	154	—	128	26	—	13	—
Nalhati I	204	1	120	85	—	31	4
Nalhati II	92	—	31	61	—	10	—
Murarai I	147	—	60	87	—	8	1
Murarai II	161	—	237	124	—	1	—
Mayureswar I	201	—	152	49	—	20	—
Mayureswar II	126	—	105	21	—	1	1
Rampurhat I	186	—	135	51	—	15	15
Rampurhat II	201	—	100	101	—	16	—
Total	3,049	6	2,078	977	—	209	42

A Secretary supervises the day-to-day business of each Anchal Panchayat, which has also Chowkidars, Dafadars and other staff to maintain. The following table gives the staffing pattern of the Anchal Panchayats falling within the different Anchalik Parishad.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Staff of the Anchal Panchayats				
	Secretaries	Dafadars	Chowkidars	Others	Total
Mahammad Bazar	12	12	80	—	104
Sainthia	13	13	104	3	133
Bolpur-Sriniketan	9	11	93	—	113
Labhpur	9	12	127	2	150
Nanur	9	13	110	1	133
Dubrajpur	11	13	95	6	125
Ilambazar	9	10	99	—	118
Rajnagar	5	7	49	—	61
Suri I	7	7	55	—	69
Suri II	6	6	47	—	59
Khayrasol	10	12	85	1	108
Nalhati I	9	10	97	1	117
Nalhati II	4	4	45	4	57
Murarai I	7	7	67	5	86
Murarai II	7	8	65	—	80
Mayureswar I	8	9	83	3	103
Mayureswar II	7	7	77	—	91
Rampurhat I	9	9	90	2	110
Rampurhat II	7	10	94	—	111
Total	158	180	1,560	28	1,928

The following table gives the financial position of the Anchal Panchayats for 1967-68 with reference to the opening balance with break-ups, total income, total expenditure, and closing balance with break-ups.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	OPENING BALANCE (IN RUPEES)			Total Income	Total Expenditure	CLOSING BALANCE AT THE END OF THE YEAR (IN RUPEES)		
	For Schemes	Untied Funds	Total			For Schemes	Untied Funds	Total
Mahammad Bazar	—	32,316.73	32,316.73	1,30,638.13	97,452.16	—	33,185.98	33,185.98
Sainthia	10,000.00	48,975.50	58,975.50	2,45,153.29	1,53,781.77	17,500.00	73,871.52	91,371.52
Bolpur-Sriniketan	—	24,546.57	24,546.57	1,20,414.53	1,03,475.87	—	16,938.66	16,938.66
Labhpur	18,885.14	—	18,885.14	1,46,318.14	1,12,617.33	—	33,690.81	33,690.81
Namur	30,258.62	—	30,258.62	1,59,176.58	1,17,236.23	205.20	41,735.15	41,940.35
Dubrajpur	—	17,023.80	17,032.80	1,29,780.18	93,904.18	—	35,876.00	35,876.00
Ilambazar	21,703.32	—	21,703.32	1,25,202 92	98,146.49	27,056.43	—	27,056.43
Rajnagar	—	9,041.80	9,041.80	61,966.10	50,206.34	—	11,759.76	11,759.76
Suri I	15,716.90	—	15,716.90	74,560.42	57,195.81	—	17,364.61	17,364.61
Suri II	—	20,075.40	20,075.40	86,420.11	66,330.63	—	20,089.48	20,089.48
Khayrasol	—	18,569.14	18,569.14	1,02,001.50	76,026.39	—	25,975.11	25,975.11
Nalhati I	—	19,757.48	19,757.48	1,92,253.88	1,34,044.17	—	58,209.71	58,209.71
Nalhati II	—	7,507.60	7,507.60	71,047.81	67,245.90	1,292.49	2,509.42	3,801.91
Murarai I	15,915.23	—	15,915.23	1,17,243.25	92,154.95	—	25,088.30	25,088.30
Murarai II	—	27,256.98	27,256.98	1,23,385.36	96,750.95	—	26,634.41	26,634.41
Mayureswar I	—	12,359.56	12,359.56	1,09,970.35	91,379.76	—	18,590,59	18,590.59
Mayureswar II	—	9,822.01	9,822.01	1,04,143.96	92,222.08	—	11,921.88	11,921.88
Rampurhat I	—	8,016.00	8,016.00	1,28,500.42	1,10,270.09	—	18,230.33	18,230.33
Rampurhat II	—	5,070.04	5,070.04	1,10,292.69	1,01,079.55	—	9,213.14	9,213.14
Total	1,12,479.21	2,60,347.61	3,72,826.82	23,38,469.62	18,11,530.64	46,054.12	4,80,884.86	5,26,938.98

The income break-ups of the Anchal Panchayats would be as follows in the table:

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Total of taxes, rates etc. realised	Total of grants and contributions made by		
		The Panchayat Department	The Anchalik Parishad	Other sources
Mahammad Bazar	37,874.87	55,193.49	—	5,253.04
Sainthia	1,07,412.19	61,769.62	4,070.00	12,925.98
Bolpur-Sriniketan	35,086.80	38,972.04	3,784.50	18,024.62
Labhpur	54,814.14	55,689.16	—	16,929.70
Nanur	59,910.90	51,825.79	3,320.00	13,861.27
Dubrajpur	45,392.52	57,150.80	—	6,093.03
				4,111.03
Ilambazar	40,618.82	52,463.31	—	10,417.47
Rajnagar	19,646.09	26,786.47	200.00	600.00
				5,691.74
Suri I	21,274.70	30,536.89	457.50	6,574.43
Suri II	28,553.73	29,042.23	1,198.50	7,550.25
Khayrasol	29,116.28	49,608.00	—	4,708.08
Nalhati I	1,00,016.23	53,961.10	—	5,163.52
				13,355.55
Nalhati II	35,818.59	22,603.12	—	5,118.50
Murarai I	56,621.65	38,120.82	—	6,585.55
Murarai II	45,634.36	36,451.35	—	2,000.00
				12,042.67
Mayureswar I	41,706.33	45,378.11	—	10,526.35
Mayureswar II	40,414.06	37,584.51	—	6,323.38
Rampurhat I	64,452.39	46,047.97	—	9,984.06
Rampurhat II	50,154.79	42,201.20	—	12,866.66
Total	9,24,519.44	8,31,335.98	13,030.50	1,96,706.88

Further break-ups of income from the rates, taxes etc. levied under various sections of the enabling legislation as also from grants and contributions by the Panchayat Department would be as follows in the two successive tables:

INCOME FROM TAXES, RATES ETC. REALISED (IN RS.)

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Under Section					
	57(1)(a)	57(1)(b)	57(2)(a)	57(2)(e)	57(2)(f)	Total
Mahammad Bazar	29,057.15	3,377.72	5,440.00	—	—	37,874.87
Sainthia	54,775.81	36,847.75	10,932.C0	2,534.86	2,321.77	1,07,412.19
Bolpur-Sriniketan	28,136.16	3,946.77	3,003.87	—	—	35,086.80
Labhpur	41,159.79	13,318.35	—	336.00	—	54,814.14
Nanur	51,701.62	5,392.88	2,816.40	—	—	59,910.90
Dubrajpur	39,608.28	3,725.84	2,058.40	—	—	45,392.52
Ilambazar	35,193.27	2,239.46	3,186.C9	—	—	40,618.82
Rajnagar	16,103.28	1,818.36	1,724.45	—	—	19,646.09
Suri I	15,124.20	4,655.00	1,495.50	—	—	21,274.70
Suri II	21,336.61	3,438.51	3,778.61	—	—	28,553.73
Khayrasol	24,225.58	1,805.96	3,084.74	—	—	29,116.28
Nalhati I	67,969.89	19,512.37	11,718.65	—	815.32	1,00,016.23
Nalhati II	32,233.25	954.10	2,631.24	—	—	35,818.59
Murarai I	39,810.76	11,144.90	5,665.99	—	—	56,621.65
Murarai II	36,014.90	3,402.56	6,216.90	—	—	45,634.36
Mayureswar I	34,498.91	4,120.72	3,086.70	—	—	41,706.33
Mayureswar II	38,934.72	4,069.99	7,409.35	—	—	50,414.06
Rampurhat I	57,622.07	3,897.32	2,933.00	—	—	64,452.39
Rampurhat II	38,855.78	6,855.95	4,443.06	—	—	50,154.79
Total	7,02,362.03	1,34,524.51	81,624.95	2,870.86	3,137.09	9,24,519.44

INCOME FROM GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS BY PANCHAYAT DEPARTMENT FOR (IN RUPEES)

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Pay and allowances of Secretaries	Chowkidars and Dafadars	Lump grants for Development works	Other purposes	Total
Mahammad Bazar	17,714.82	21,948.87	15,529.80	—	55,193.49
Sainthia	19,072.97	25,796.65	16,900.00	—	61,769.62
Bolpur-Sriniketan	13,609.10	13,411.54	11,951.40	—	38,972.04
Labhpur	14,211.81	29,830.00	11,647.35	—	55,689.16
Nanur	14,712.72	25,461.67	11,651.40	—	51,825.79
Dubrajpur	16,355.10	26,555.10	14,240.60	—	57,150.80
Ilambazar	14,716.93	25,446.38	12,300.00	—	52,463.31
Rajnagar	7,231.47	13,055.00	6,500.00	—	26,786.47
Suri I	9,087.02	14,449.87	7,000.00	—	30,536.89
Suri II	9,121.99	12,120.24	1,800.00 6,000.00	—	29,042.23
Khayrasol	14,815.00	21,793.00	3,000.00 10,000.00	—	49,608.00
Nalhati I	18,595.90	24,013.80	11,351.40	—	53,961.10
Nalhati II	6,441.68	10,985.44	5,176.00	—	22,603.12
Murarai I	11,830.17	17,231.60	9,059.05	—	38,120.82
Murarai II	10,539.25	16,859.35	9,052.75	—	36,451.35
Mayureswar I	12,401.90	22,576.21	10,400.00	—	45,378.11
Mayureswar II	9,581.46	18,903.05	9,100.00	—	37,584.51
Rampurhat I	11,532.97	22,815.00	11,700.00	—	46,047.97
Rampurhat II	9,092.30	24,008.90	9,100.00	—	42,201.20
Total	2,40,664.56	3,87,261.67	2,03,459.75	—	8,31,385.98

The break-ups of the expenditure indicating the corresponding source of income are given in the table below:

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Total of expenditure in respect of grants received from the Panchayat Department	Expenditure in respect of grants received from the Anchalik Parishad	Other expenditure
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	51,678.59	—	45,773.56
Sainthia	61,574.57	1,070.00	91,137.20
Bolpur-Sriniketan	38,972.04	3,784.50	60,719.33
Labhpur	55,689.16	—	56,938.17
Nanur	51,620.59	1,132.84	64,482.80
Dubrajpur	53,548.20	—	40,355.98
Ilambazar	52,463.31	—	45,683.18
Rajnagar	26,786.47	200.00	23,219.87
Suri I	30,536.89	1,300.00	25,358.92
Suri II	26,856.23	1,100.50	38,373.90
Khayrasol	45,090.56	1,314.47	29,621.36
Nalhati I	53,961.10	—	80,083.07
Nalhati II	22,550.86	—	44,695.04
Murarai I	38,120.82	—	54,034.13
Murarai II	36,451.35	2,000.00	58,299.60
Mayureswar I	45,378.11	—	46,001.65
Mayureswar II	37,684.51	—	54,637.57
Rampurhat I	46,047.97	—	64,222.12
Rampurhat II	42,201.20	398.00	58,480.35
Total	8,17,112.53	12,300.31	9,82,117.88

A further break-up of the expenditure in respect of grants from the Panchayat Department would be as follows in the table :

EXPENDITURE IN RESPECT OF GRANTS RECEIVED FROM THE PANCHAYAT DEPT. (IN RUPEES)

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Pay and allowances of Secretaries	Chowkidars and Dafadars	Sub-allotment to G.P. for Development works	For other purposes	Total
Mahammad Bazar	17,714.82	21,948.87	12,014.90	—	51,678.59
Sainthia	19,072.97	25,796.65	16,640.60	—	61,574.57
Bolpur-Sriniketan	13,609.10	13,411.54	11,951.40	—	38,972.04
Labhpur	14,211.81	29,830.00	11,647.35	—	55,689.16
Nanur	14,712.72	25,461.67	11,446.20	—	51,620.59
Dubrajpur	16,355.10	26,555.10	10,638.00	—	53,548.20
Ilambazar	14,716.93	25,446.38	12,300.00	—	52,463.31
Rajnagar	7,231.47	13,055.00	6,500.00	—	26,786.47
Suri I	9,087.02	14,449.87	7,000.00	—	30,536.89
Suri II	8,680.99	11,175.24	7,000.00	—	26,856.23
Khayrasol	14,815.00	21,793.00	8,482.56	—	45,090.56
Nalhati I	18,595.90	24,013.80	11,351.40	—	53,961.10
Nalhati II	6,389.42	10,985.44	5,176.00	—	22,550.86
Murarai I	11,830.17	17,231.60	9,059.05	—	38,120.82
Murarai II	10,539.25	16,859.35	9,052.75	—	36,451.35
Mayureswar I	12,401.90	22,576.21	10,400.00	—	45,378.11
Mayureswar II	9,581.46	18,903.05	9,100.00	—	37,584.51
Rampurhat I	11,532.97	22,815.00	11,700.00	—	46,047.97
Rampurhat II	9,092.30	24,088.90	9,100.00	—	42,201.20
Total	2,40,171.30	3,86,316.67	1,90,624.56	—	8,17,112.53

G.P.—Gram Panchayat.

An aspect of the finance of the Anchal Panchayats may be noted here and that is the income from tax, toll, fee rate or other imposition provided by the Act. Section 57(1)(a) provides for a yearly imposition of a tax upon persons who are the owners or occupiers or owners and occupiers of lands or buildings or both within the local limits of the jurisdiction of the Anchal Panchayat according to the circumstances of such persons within the limits of the Anchal Panchayat and according to the value of the property within such limits of the said persons. The table below gives the figures of assessment and collection of the taxes under this section for 1967-68.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Current		Arrear		Total	
	Assessed	Collection	Assessed	Collection	Assessed	Collection
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs	Rs
Mahammad Bazar	32,662.90	26,497.14	6,744.87	2,560.01	39,407.77	29,057.15
Sainthia	53,804.92	41,832.32	24,825.74	12,943.49	78,630.66	54,775.81
Bolpur-Sriniketan	33,084.74	24,221.77	11,224.78	3,914.39	44,309.52	28,136.16
Labhpur	35,790.18	25,157.29	24,794.96	16,002.50	60,585.14	41,159.79
Nanur	55,792.58	46,534.55	17,626.33	5,167.07	73,418.91	51,701.62
Dubrajpur	27,655.29	12,951.76	39,046.64	26,656.52	66,701.93	39,608.28
Ilambazar	38,218.77	31,425.48	7,341.47	3,767.79	45,560.24	35,193.27
Rajnagar	21,361.35	16,103.28	5,620.32	—	26,981.67	16,103.28
Suri I	19,405.76	12,796.66	5,100.00	2,327.54	24,505.76	15,124.20
Suri II	23,248.79	19,440.70	5,101.01	1,895.91	28,349.80	21,336.61
Khayrasol	29,325.22	21,701.70	11,457.27	2,523.88	40,782.49	24,225.58
Nalhati I	37,325.51	28,581.64	49,544.65	39,388.25	86,870.16	67,969.89
Nalhati II	19,524.29	10,885.00	28,289.19	21,348.25	47,813.48	32,233.25
Murarai I	35,364.91	32,291.37	9,795.05	7,519.39	45,160.00	39,810.76
Murarai II	45,420.03	33,377.86	4,959.11	2,637.04	50,379.14	36,014.90
Mayureswar I	36,330.17	30,438.02	6,425.63	4,060.89	42,755.80	34,498.91
Mayureswar II	31,974.98	25,676.64	21,157.81	13,258.08	53,132.79	38,934.72
Rampurhat I	55,432.49	29,620.41	33,391.44	28,001.66	88,823.93	57,622.07
Rampurhat II	42,851.96	37,107.60	6,211.60	1,748.18	49,063.56	38,855.78

The following table gives the analogous figures relating to the tax on profession, trades or callings under section 57(1)(b).

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Current		Arrear		Total	
	Assessed Rs.	Collection Rs.	Assessed Rs.	Collection Rs.	Assessed Rs.	Collection Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	4,147.43	3,268.10	876.08	109.62	5,023.51	3,377.72
Sainthia	38,419.16	26,276.15	18,487.51	10,571.60	56,906.67	36,847.75
Bolpur-Sriniketan	7,762.71	3,532.47	3,658.19	414.30	11,420.90	3,946.77
Labhpur	17,117.40	9,099.40	8,507.44	44,218.95	25,624.84	13,318.35
Nanur	5,661.50	3,622.62	6,075.76	1,770.26	11,737.26	5,392.88
Dubrajpur	16,641.18	2,565.88	9,599.91	1,159.96	26,241.09	3,725.84
Ilambazar	3,078.20	1,906.83	1,893.09	332.63	4,971.29	2,239.46
Rajnagar	2,964.33	1,818.36	864.00	—	3,828.33	1,818.36
Suri I	7,163.29	3,775.79	2,613.90	879.21	9,777.19	4,655.00
Suri II	4,260.24	3,181.66	1,427.28	256.85	5,687.52	3,438.51
Khayrasol	3,308.68	1,535.60	2,708.99	270.36	6,017.67	1,805.96
Nalhati I	22,761.12	13,035.79	15,087.66	6,476.58	37,848.78	19,512.37
Nalhati II	1,129.65	601.50	672.98	352.60	1,802.63	954.10
Murarai I	14,311.10	10,687.37	3,111.91	457.53	17,423.01	11,174.90
Murarai II	8,796.43	3,313.56	3,405.98	89.00	12,202.41	3,402.56
Mayureswar I	5,512.04	3,586.11	1,100.00	534.61	6,612.04	4,120.72
Mayureswar II	2,699.90	2,583.85	2,118.10	1,486.14	4,818.00	4,069.99
Rampurhat I	4,533.30	2,987.80	2,340.84	909.52	6,874.14	3,897.32
Rampurhat II	9,948.28	6,474.14	3,011.83	381.81	12,960.11	6,855.95

Section 57(2)(a) provides for the fees on the registration of vehicles and the table below gives the figures of income from this source :

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Current		Arrear		Total	
	Assessed Rs.	Collection Rs.	Assessed Rs.	Collection Rs.	Assessed Rs.	Collection Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	6,323.00	5,340.00	488.00	100.00	6,811.00	5,440.00
Sainthia	11,736.00	8,768.00	4,252.00	2,164.00	15,988.00	10,932.00
Bolpur-Sriniketan	5,265.72	2,771.35	2,463.11	232.52	7,728.83	3,003.87
Labhpur	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanur	4,400.21	2,701.15	2,039.05	115.25	6,439.26	2,816.40
Dubrajpur	2,570.84	900.72	2,447.84	1,157.68	5,018.68	2,058.40
Ilambazar	3,658.00	2,851.80	1,159.34	334.29	4,817.34	3,186.09
Rajnagar	2,456.25	1,724.45	—	—	2,456.25	1,724.45
Suri I	2,431.00	1,344.15	1,410.30	151.35	3,841.30	1,495.50
Suri II	4,531.32	3,656.94	893.43	121.67	5,424.75	3,778.61
Khayrasol	4,310.66	3,056.42	1,935.72	28.32	6,246.38	3,084.74
Nalhati I	7,483.55	5,674.85	8,888.07	6,043.80	16,371.62	11,718.65
Nalhati II	4,570.00	2,507.24	342.00	124.00	4,912.00	2,631.24
Murarai I	6,687.80	5,648.71	321.42	17.28	7,009.22	5,665.99
Murarai II	7,952.55	6,042.10	1,274.80	174.80	9,227.35	6,216.90
Mayureswar I	3,594.75	3,000.70	700.00	86.00	4,294.75	3,086.70
Mayureswar II	4,844.50	3,463.60	2,814.20	3,945.75	7,658.70	7,409.35
Rampurhat I	4,182.00	2,202.00	1,402.00	731.00	5,584.00	2,933.00
Rampurhat II	5,405.71	4,333.04	1,136.78	110.02	6,542.49	4,443.06

Section 57(2)(e) provides for a lighting rate, where arrangement for lighting of public streets and places is made by the Gram Panchayat within its jurisdiction for 1967-68. Anchal Panchayats within only two Anchalik Parishads imposed such tax and the relevant figures are as given below :

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Current		Arrear		Total	
	Assessed	Collection	Assessed	Collection	Assessed	Collection
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sainthia	2,287.22	1,857.78	979.83	677.08	3,267.05	2,534.86
Bolpur-Sriniketan	—	—	—	—	—	—
Labhpur	355.00	—	325.00	—	680.00	—
Nanur	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dubrajpur	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ilambazar	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rajnagar	—	—	—	—	—	—
Suri I	—	—	—	—	—	—
Suri II	—	—	—	—	—	—
Khayrasol	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nalhati I	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nalhati II	—	—	—	—	—	—
Murarai I	—	—	—	—	—	—
Murarai II	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mayureswar I	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mayureswar II	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rampurhat I	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rampurhat II	—	—	—	—	—	—

Section 57(2)(f) provides for a conservancy rate, where arrangement for clearing private latrines, urinals, cesspools is made by the Gram Panchayat within its jurisdiction. The table below gives the relevant figures for the Anchal Panchayats within three Anchalik Parishads with the exception that figures relating to assessment in respect of the Anchal Panchayats within Labhpur Anchalik Parishad were not available

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Current		Arrear		Total	
	Assessed	Collection	Assessed	Collection	Assessed	Collection
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs	Rs.	Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sainthia	2,248.69	1,720.28	793.41	601.49	3,042.10	2,321.77
Labhpur	—	194.00	—	142.00	—	336.00
Nalhati I	677.62	378.78	677.62	438.54	1,355.24	815.32

It may be noted that there were no imposition under sections 52(2)(b), 57(2) and 57(2)(d).

The number of Gram Panchayats within each Anchalik Parishad along with the respective strength of member and the number of meetings of Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas are given in the following table valid for 1967-68.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	No. of Gram Panchayats within the Anchalik Parishad	Total No. of members of the G.P.	No. of meetings of the G.Ps.	No. of meetings of the Gram Sabhas
Mahammad Bazar	50	515	246	73
Sainthia	67	672	465	78
Bolpur-Sriniketan	52	577	220	94
Labhpur	55	634	273	30
Nanur	52	652	335	70
Dubrajpur	65	793	70	41
Ilambazar	57	685	402	76
Rajnagar	35	421	126	9
Suri I	40	447	240	30
Suri II	37	386	160	10
Khayrasol	63	753	256	18
Nalhati I	62	640	184	45
Nalhati II	35	363	259	18
Murarai I	46	484	322	56
Murarai II	49	525	294	63
Mayureswar I	65	731	325	65
Mayureswar II	48	553	434	42
Rampurhat I	54	705	491	108
Rampurhat II	56	723	354	61
Total	988	11,259	5,476	1,059

The sex composition and community distribution of the members would be as follows.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Composition		Community Distribution				
	Men	Women	Hindu (including S. C.&S.T.)	Muslims	Others	Sch. castes	Sch. tribes
Mahammad Bazar	512	3	409	105	1	83	89
Sainthia	672	—	567	105	—	97	32
Bolpur-Sriniketan	575	2	451	125	1	63	48
Labhpur	633	1	499	135	—	75	10
Nanur	651	1	475	177	—	104	—
Dubrajpur	792	1	586	207	—	101	9
Ilambazar	685	—	385	300	—	158	47
Rajnagar	420	1	375	46	—	97	39
Suri I	447	—	354	93	—	96	16
Suri II	385	1	277	109	—	87	32
Khayrasol	753	—	628	125	—	161	6
Nalhati I	639	1	392	246	2	181	26
Nalhati II	363	—	141	222	—	63	—
Murarai I	484	—	235	249	—	64	26
Murarai II	525	—	163	362	—	47	—
Mayureswar I	731	—	577	154	—	187	20
Mayureswar II	553	—	448	105	—	98	14
Rampurhat I	704	1	531	173	1	139	98
Rampurhat II	723	—	418	305	—	164	—
Total	11,247	12	7,911	3,343	5	2,365	514

The incomes of the Gram Panchayats during 1967-68 from different sources were as given in the following statement.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Opening Balance		Allotment from Anchal Panchayats		Receipts from gifts, endowments and other sources	Allotment received from other sources for Development work
	For specific schemes	Untied funds	From Panchayat Deptt.	Own resources		
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	—	18,460.05	12,014.90	3,170.10	141.27	—
Sainthia	28,700.00	1,505.25	16,704.95	37,964.13	2,187.87	300.00
Bolpur-Sriniketan	22,368.14	—	11,951.40	8,678.10	391.26	—
Labhpur	9,159.84	208.94	11,647.35	6,150.58	50.00	—
Nanur	—	14,585.40	11,446.20	26,316.91	4,487.86	1,632.51
Dubrajpur	3,672.26	10,918.44	10,688.00	—	4,245.05	—
Ilambazar	8,880.74	—	12,300.00	12,274.00	720.21	—
Rajnagar	—	5,963.95	6,500.00	4,879.40	878.36	200.00
Suri I	—	9,038.89	7,000.00	3,260.00	661.81	457.50
Suri II	—	6,892.33	7,000.00	12,514.00	1,470.22	400.00
Khayrasol	—	1,617.08	8,482.53	—	—	—
Nalhati I	—	11,394.71	11,351.40	15,388.60	1,968.70	—
Nalhati II	2,940.05	601.50	6,176.00	13,543.30	—	9,030.56
Murarai I	12,782.09	—	9,059.05	16,765.95	17,149.90	—
Murarai II	—	13,588.07	9,052.75	18,730.55	10,498.73	1,000.00
Mayureswar I	—	5,819.13	10,400.00	6,491.50	—	—
Mayureswar II	—	212.16	9,100.00	12,010.16	—	—
Rampurhat I	—	1,900.00	11,700.00	24,631.12	1,430.72	—
Rampurhat II	8,035.37	—	9,100.00	10,400.92	2,854.03	—

The expenditures and the closing balances of the Gram Panchayats for 1967-68 were as follows as shown in the table.

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Expenditure		Closing Balance		
	For Development works	Other expenditure	For specific schemes	Untied Funds	Total
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Mahammad Bazar	16,703.52	545.59	—	16,537.21	16,537.21
Sainthia	39,652.03	10,570.26	36,680.00	3,159.91	39,839.91
Bolpur-Sriniketan	25,529.95	1,625.08	16,233.87	—	16,233.87
Labhpur	16,782.16	3,046.30	7,388.35	—	7,388.35
Nanur	40,125.99	2,204.09	—	16,138.80	16,138.80
Dubrajpur	12,204.60	3,412.31	1,525.54	12,331.30	13,856.84
Ilambazar	18,955.21	2,125.98	13,083.76	—	13,083.76
Rajnagar	8,492.49	1,229.85	—	8,099.37	8,099.37
Suri I	10,959.80	453.58	—	9,004.82	9,004.82
Suri II	16,603.02	1,498.08	400.00	9,775.45	10,175.45
Khayrasol	7,617.00	945.28	—	1,537.36	1,537.36
Nalhati I	22,711.71	2,014.93	—	15,376.77	15,376.77
Nalhati II	22,470.46	2,363.51	5,522.23	935.21	6,457.44
Murarai I	35,848.31	1,938.55	17,970.13	—	17,970.13
Murarai II	32,857.36	3,580.02	—	16,432.72	16,432.72
Mayureswar I	15,455.45	1,562.22	—	5,692.96	5,692.96
Mayureswar II	17,446.06	1,005.51	—	2,870.75	2,870.75
Rampurhat I	30,192.65	5,400.00	—	4,069.19	4,069.19
Rampurhat II	20,099.04	2,374.38	7,916.90	—	7,916.90

APPENDIX A

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Finance and Establishment		Public Health		Public Works		Agriculture and Irrigation		Industry and Irrigation		Public and Social Welfare		Primary Education	
	No. of meetings	Average attendance	No. of meetings	Average attendance	No. of meetings	Average attendance	No. of meetings	Average attendance	No. of meetings	Average attendance	No. of meetings	Average attendance	No. of meetings	Average attendance
Mahammad Bazar	4	5	—	—	—	—	3	6	1	8	—	—	—	—
Sainthia	6	6	3	4	1	5	4	5	1	4	—	—	—	—
Bolpur-Sriniketan	3	4	4	4	—	—	1	4	—	—	2	4	3	4
Labhpur	5	7	3	6	—	—	1	6	—	—	2	5	—	—
Nanur	4	5	4	3	1	4	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dubrajpur	4	7	2	7	—	—	1	6	—	—	1	7	—	—
Ilambazar	4	5	4	5	—	—	—	—	1	6	2	6	—	—
Rajnagar	6	5	1	5	2	6	1	5	2	5	1	4	5	4
Suri I	4	5	1	6	—	—	5	6	1	6	4	5	1	5
Suri II	7	5	3	6	1	5	4	7	2	6	3	4	—	—
Khayrasol	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nalhati I	2	5	8	4	—	—	—	—	2	4	1	5	—	—
Nalhati II	6	6	3	6	1	9	5	6	3	6	1	5	1	5
Murarai I	2	7	3	7	2	4	2	4	1	4	—	—	—	—
Murarai II	8	7	8	5	2	5	4	5	2	5	5	5	3	6
Mayureswar I	5	7	3	6	2	6	1	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mayureswar II	4	5	1	6	—	—	2	4	1	4	—	—	—	—
Rampurhat I	6	7	3	6	—	—	2	8	2	6	4	7	3	8
Rampurhat II	2	8	1	6	—	—	—	—	1	6	—	—	—	—
Total	82	106	55	92	12	44	40	81	20	70	26	57	16	32

APPENDIX B

INCOME OF THE ANCHALIK PARISHADS (IN RUPEES)

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Opening Balance as stood on 1st April 1967			Receipt from the Panchayat Department		Allotment receipt from the Zilla Parishad	Receipts on account of tolls, rates and fees levied by the Anchalik Parishad	Other receipt	Total Income including balance
	Specific	Untied	Total	Grants	Total				
Mahammad Bazar	6,280.00	9,738.67	16,018.67	7,713.00	7,713.00	4,861.00	—	—	28,592.67
Sainthia	13,053.00	—	13,053.79	7,213.00	7,213.00	6,421.00	4,346.00	686.10	31,719.89
Bolpur-Sriniketan	1,89,583.90	7,818.73	1,91,402.63	7,713.00	7,713.00	10,228.00	—	—	2,09,343.63
Labhpur	21,291.12	—	21,291.12	7,713.00	7,713.00	8,550.00	412.00	—	37,966.12
Nanur	12,714.77	8,772.27	21,487.04	7,713.00	7,713.00	7,654.00	—	218.06	37,072.10
Dubrajpur	9,608.13	8,839.85	18,447.98	7,713.00	7,713.00	11,174.00	640.00	—	37,974.98
Ilambazar	26,193.42	—	26,293.42	7,713.00	7,713.00	8,228.00	—	600.00	42,834.42
Rajnagar	10,001.87	7,771.51	17,773.38	7,713.00	7,713.00	10,477.00	—	646.80	36,610.18
Suri I	28,900.05	4,210.80	33,110.85	7,713.00	7,713.00	9,619.00	310.00	—	50,743.85
Suri II	9,436.67	6,361.83	15,798.50	7,713.00	7,713.00	9,270.00	—	2,800.00	35,581.50
Khayrasol	4,431.48	8,054.01	12,485.49	7,713.00	7,713.00	11,421.00	—	—	32,042.78
Nalhati I	6,479.35	15,539.70	22,019.05	7,713.00	7,713.00	8,550.00	—	592.00	38,874.05
Nalhati II	11,673.36	6,330.88	18,004.24	7,713.00	7,713.00	5,261.50	—	96.35	31,075.13
Murarai I	5,157.50	10,912.42	16,269.92	7,713.00	7,713.00	9,271.00	766.25	100.00	34,120.17
Murarai II	17,777.68	7,463.90	25,241.58	7,713.00	7,713.00	12,578.00	105.00	259.04	45,898.62
Mayureswar I	—	5,369.21	5,369.21	7,213.00	7,213.00	6,080.90	—	434.25	19,097.36
Mayureswar II	22,171.27	—	22,171.27	7,713.00	7,713.00	6,421.00	—	—	36,305.27
Rampurhat I	10,390.35	6,810.79	17,201.14	7,713.00	7,713.00	7,497.25	—	20.00	35,645.22
Rampurhat II	—	6,521.53	6,521.53	7,213.00	7,213.00	8,550.00	—	—	22,284.53
Total	3,99,444,71	1,20,516.10	5,19,960.81	1,45,047.00	1,45,047.00	1,62,112.65	6,579.25	6,452.60	8,43,780.47

APPENDIX C

EXPENDITURE OF THE ANCHALIK PARISHADS (IN RUPEES)

Name of the Anchalik Parishad	Establishment Expenditure Total	Allotment to Gram Panchayats & Anchal Panchayats	Expenditure incurred by the Anchalik Parishad for Development works	Other expenditure (including refund, if any)	Total expenditure of the Anchalik Parishad	Closing Balance at the end of the year: For Specific schemes	Closing Balance at the end of the year: Untied funds	Closing Balance at the end of the year: Total
Mahammad Bazar	4,182.15	—	6,300.00	1,788.00	12,270.15	9,201.00	7,121.52	16,322.52
Sainthia	5,668.33	4,070.00	1,120.97	1,586.10	12,445.40	—	19,274.49	19,274.49
Bolpur-Sriniketan	8,785.94	3,784.50	25,284.41	3,613.65	41,468.50	1,61,354.34	6,520.79	1,67,875.13
Labhpur	4,639.08	—	8,709.64	7,005.12	20,353.84	17,612.28	—	17,612.28
Nanur	11,170.15	3,320.00	12,151.52	450.00	27,091.67	4,892.22	5,088.21	9,980.43
Dubrajpur	3,760.83	—	3,026.00	2,021.20	8,808.03	6,582.13	22,584.82	29,166.95
Ilambazar	5,070.90	—	11,257.11	13,376.05	29,704.06	13,130.36	—	13,130.36
Rajnagar	6,420.58	200.00	7,942.55	8,412.67	22,975.80	4,270.45	9,363.93	13,634.38
Suri I	7,006.88	457.50	13,215.70	2,860.92	23,541.43	22,442.43	4,760.42	27,202.85
Suri II	7,027.18	1,198.50	3,694.70	7,418.11	19,338.49	8,395.10	7,847.91	16,243.01
Khayrasol	6,995.50	—	12,118.10	—	19,113.60	3,900.00	9,029.18	12,929.18
Nalhati I	9,596.47	—	4,757.20	12,642.57	26,996.24	4,108.93	7,768.88	11,877.81
Nalhati II	6,459.05	—	5,984.16	13,135.71	25,578.92	2,161.38	3,334.83	5,496.21
Murarai I	9,380.21	—	11,341.96	—	20,722.17	5,588.10	7,809.90	13,398.00
Murarai II	10,262.60	—	14,691.96	10,056.93	35,011.49	6,421.33	4,463.80	10,885.13
Mayureswar I	5,500.36	—	5,143.80	1,750.00	12,394.11	—	6,703.20	6,703.20
Mayureswar II	9,523.55	—	8,550.49	6,393.34	24,467.38	11,827.89	—	11,837.89
Rampurhat I	11,187.22	—	12,090.84	1,265.00	24,543.06	6,415.89	4,686.27	11,102.16
Rampurhat II	7,862.70	—	50.00	—	7,912.70	8,500.00	5,871.83	14,371.83
Total	1,40,499.68	13,030.50	1,67,431.11	93,775.37	4,14,736.66	2,96,813.83	1,32,229.98	4,29,043.81

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Not much is known about the state of education and culture in the district in Early and Medieval times. The earliest reference to a man of culture is found in the Belava inscription of Bhojavarmana of Vikrampur and in the Bhuvaneswar inscription of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva which refers to a person called Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa who lived during the 11th century. This Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa was a Samavediya Kauthum-Sakhadhyayi Smarta Brahman of Savarna gotra. He hailed from the village Siddhala in Rāḍha, identified with the village Sidhuli in Suri police station area. Although Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa took up service under the Varmana kings of Vikrampur, he never lost contact with his village and gave to his village a tank and a temple. He was an opponent of Buddhism and a scholar of *mimaṁsa, siddhānta, tantra, āgama, ganita, jyotirvidyā, arthasāstra, dharma, nīti, smṛiti* and *āyurveda* and had written treatises on all these subjects.

There is considerable difference of opinion about placing of Jayadeva, the most important Sanskrit poet of the Medieval times, in Birbhum district. Jayadeva has mentioned the name of Kendubilva as the place of his birth. But the identification of this village is difficult. Three places in three states, viz., Kendoli in Darbhanga district of Bihar, Kenduli Sasana in Puri district of Orissa and Jayadeva-Kenduli (J. L. No. 63) in Ilambazar police station area in Birbhum, where a traditional *melā* is held, claim the right to be regarded as Jayadeva's Kendubilva. For the present, the question of Jayadeva's place of birth and residence must remain an open one. Apart from *Gita Govinda*, Jayadeva's most famous work, he wrote several other poems, not all on the subject of the divine love of Krishna and Radha.

Chandidasa* is the most celebrated poet of early Bengali literature. But then, Chandidasa is probably the most controversial figure among the historians of Bengali literature and

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* Sukumar Sen—*Bangala Sahityer Itihas*, Vol. I, Part I (3rd Edn.). Calcutta, 1959, pp. 117-74. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyaya—*Bangala Sahityer Itibritta*, Vol. I. Calcutta, 1963, pp. 280-348. S. K. Chatterji—*The Origin and Development of Bengali Language*. Calcutta, 1926, Numerous other articles by Basantaranjan Ray Vidwadballabha, Jogesh Chandra Ray Vidyanidhi, Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya Sahityaratna, Satyakinkar Sahana and Muhammad Sahidullah in *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Patrika* on this controversy.

language. The controversy centres round the problems of (1) whether there were one or more than one Chandidasas, (2) if Chandidasa had been only one poet — which was the place of his nativity and later life, (3) if Chandidasa had been the name of more than one poet, which Chandidasa is to be associated with which place and which works.

The author of *Srikrishnakirtana*, the earliest known Bengali book (the manuscript of which was found in 1909 by Basantaranjan Ray Vidwadballabha from the village of Kankilya in Bankura district is palaeographically and linguistically ascribed to the 15th century), describes himself at the end of his *padas* as Badu or as Anantabaḍu or as Basuli-worshipper Chandidasa.

Even before the discovery of *Srikrishnakirtana* in 1909, the name of Chandidasa was not unknown in Bengal. Several Bengali Vaishnava lyrics and devotional songs are supposed to have been composed by Chandidasa. But the composer of these lyrics and songs have inevitably described himself as Dwija or Deena Chandidasa.

In view of the identical nature of some *padas* of Dwija or Deena Chandidasa and certain passages occuring in *Srikrishnakirtana*, scholars were at first inclined to regard Dwija or Deena Chandidasa of the *padas* and Baḍu or Anantabaḍu or Basuli-worshipper Chandidasa as one and the same person.

With it began the controversy regarding the place of birth, nativity and work of Chandidasa. Before the discovery of *Srikrishnakirtana* from Kankilya in Bankura, the village Chandidasa-Nunur in Nanur police station area of Birbhum had been nurturing the tradition of the *padakār* Chandidasa as a son of the village. After the discovery of *Srikrishnakirtana* manuscript, scholars like Jogesh Chandra Ray Vidyanidhi and Satyakinkar Sahana claimed for Chhatna in Bankura district the distinction of being the place of birth and work of Chandidasa on the basis of location of the Basuli temple. On the other hand, scholars of the stature of Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya Sahityaratna and Basantaranjan Ray Vidwadballabha advanced the claim of Nanur to be regarded as the place of birth, nativity and work of Chandidasa.

The consensus of opinion among scholars is, however, in favour of regarding Chandidasa of *Srikrishnakirtana* fame and Chandidasa of the *Padavalis* as two different persons and accepting Chhatna as the place of birth and residence of Basuli-worshipper

Anantabaḍu or Baḍu Chandidasa of *Srikrishnakirtana* and Nanur in Birbhum as the place of birth and residence of Dwija or Deena Chandidasa of Vaishnava devotional songs.

The controversy has not yet been fully resolved as some scholars have expressed misgivings about the authenticity of the text of *Srikrishnakirtana*, while others have questioned the ascribed date of the text. Secondly, in view of the identical nature of some passages of *Srikrishnakirtana* and *pada* lyrics, the differentiation of Chandidasa assumes a dubious validity. Lastly, Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya Sahityaratna, one of the original exponents of the theory that Nanur in Birbhum was Chandidasa's place of birth and nativity, is now inclined to change his opinion, subject to further investigations in this matter, in favour of a third place, namely, Ketugram in the Burdwan district, from where the poet supposedly came to live in Nanur in his later life.

From different parts of Birbhum district manuscript copies of many sanskrit texts on different subjects have been found, the original authors of none of which seem to have been resident of the district. Moreover, none of the manuscript copies go back further beyond the seventeenth century. Yet, these are indirect evidences to prove that, if there had not been any institution of Sanskrit learning like *tols* and *chatuspathis*, there were at least some individual scholars to make use of these manuscript-books.

Writing about the period up to 1830 from the early days of British rule, E. G. Drake-Brockman reported that "there were no schools, either public or private, in the district. ... In 1823 the Magistrate, Mr. Garrett, proposed that schools should be established, where pupils could be kept as much and for as long a period as possible from the contaminating society of their ignorant and superstitious relatives."[1]

Reporting about the condition of 1856-57, W. W. Hunter wrote about the existence of one Government managed High English school at Suri, presumably Zilah School, having 129 pupils on its rolls. There was a Government managed vernacular school and a Government aided vernacular school having a joint strength of 118 students. In 1860-61, there were 2 Government managed English schools with 229 pupils, one Government managed vernacular school, 5 Government aided

[1] E. G. Drake-Brockman—*Notes on the Early Administration of the District of Birbhum*, Calcutta, 1898, p. 31.

English schools with 399 pupils and 2 Government aided vernacular schools with 285 students. In 1870-71, the number of Government managed English schools came down to the original one which had a roll strength of 138 pupils. Number of Government managed vernacular schools, however, had risen to 2 which had 81 pupils on the rolls. And there were 21 Government aided English schools with 694 pupils, 54 Government aided vernacular schools with 1,817 pupils and there came up 3 Government aided Girls' schools which had altogether 80 pupils on the rolls. In 1872-73, the Government managed High English school at Suri had 270 pupils. The Government aided High English schools at Surul and Hetampur had a total roll strength of 81 pupils. 247 students were studying at the 8 Middle English schools in the district receiving aid from the Government. Of the two unaided Middle English schools in which 36 pupils were studying, the one at Bolpur was the earliest to be established. Two Government managed Middle Vernacular schools had, between them, 76 students, but a total number of 377 students were on the rolls of 9 Government aided Middle vernacular schools. There were 2 Government aided Lower Vernacular schools with 59 students on the rolls. Government aided Primary schools numbering 103 had a roll strength of 3,270 students and altogether 409 students attended the 15 unaided Primary schools in existence in the district. The number of Government aided Girls' schools came down to 2, of which the Baptist Mission School in Suri was the earliest to be established and these two schools had, between them, 59 students. The aforementioned schools, whether managed by Government or by private agencies but receiving grants-in-aid from Government, or managed by private agencies without any financial help from Government, all came under the purview of inspection by the inspectors of the Education Department of the provincial government. Apart from these schools, there were 544 purely privately managed and financed schools of all categories, catering to the educational needs of 7,103 students, which were running without the necessary recognition from the Education Department of the same government. Besides, there were several educational institutions run on traditional lines, among which mention should be made of 392 Bengali *pāṭhsālās* for boys, one Bengali *pāṭhsālā* for girls, 3 Sanskrit *tols* and 16 *maktabs* for Muslim boys. Following Mr. Garrett's suggestion made in 1823, Government launched two Model schools, one

at Purandarpur and one at Tantipara, under its own management in 1870-71, which after a while proved abortive.[1]

Writing in 1909-10, L.S.S.O'Malley reported about the existence of 7 High English schools with 1,610 pupils of which the Zillah School at Suri was a Government managed institution, the ones at Bandhgora, Hetampur, Labhpur, Larakunda and Rampurhat were privately managed schools receiving aid from Government and the one at Kirnahar was an unaided private institution. There were no less than 25 Middle English schools (20 aided and 5 unaided) attended by 2,565 boys and 15 girls, 19 Middle Vernacular schools (3 run by the District Board, 12 aided and 4 unaided schools) at which 1,615 boys and 39 girls received education. Of the 928 Primary schools for boys, 99 schools with 4,469 pupils were Upper Primary schools. Four of these were under government management, 94 were aided and one unaided institution. Rest, i.e., 829 were Lower Primary schools with 20,435 pupils, of which 777 received aid from government agencies and 52 were unaided. At the end of 1908-09, altogether 2,985 girls were under instruction, 1,504 in boys' schools and 1,481 in girls' schools. The number of the latter was 80, and all but one were Lower Primary schools, 68 being aided and 11 unaided. The one exception was the Middle Vernacular school at Suri, called the Rivers' Thompson Girls' School. Apart from these modern institutions, there were some traditional institutions of education which included 10 recognized Sanskrit *tols*, two unrecognized Sanskrit *tols*, one *madrasa* and 14 *maktabs* for boys and 5 *maktabs* for girls.

The foundation of the greatest educational complex in the district at Santiniketan was laid at the close of the nineteenth century which will be discussed at length at the end of the chapter.

Krishnachandra College at Hetampur, founded in 1897 by late Rani Padmasundari Devi to commemorate the memory of her father-in-law, the late Raja Krishnachandra of Hetampur, is the earliest institution of higher education in the district.

Given below is a list of now extant High schools in the district which were established during the nineteenth century with the years of their establishment and affiliation to the University of Calcutta as High schools:

[1] W. W. Hunter—*A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. IV. London, 1876.

WEST BENGAL
BIRBHUM DISTRICT
PERCENTAGE OF LITERATES
TO TOTAL POPULATION 1961
INDEX
25 — 29%
21 — 25%
17 — 21%
13 — 17%
COMPARATIVE LITERATES 1961
MALES
FEMALES
LITERATES
MURARAI
NALHATI
RAMPURHAT
MAHAMMADBAZAR
MAYURESWAR
RAJNAGAR
SURI
SAINTHIA
KHAYRASOL
DUBRAJPUR
LABHPUR
AJOY RIVER
BOLPUR
NANUR
ILLAMBAZAR
N
SCALE
MILES 2 0 2 4 6 MILES
0 8 KM
REFERENCE
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
THANA BOUNDARY
RIVER
PREPARED BY
DILIP K. KHAN

WEST BENGAL
BIRBHUM DISTRICT
PRIMARY & JUNIOR BASIC SCHOOLS 1967-68
INDEX
ONE CIRCLE REPRESENTS
20 PRIMARY SCHOOLS
ONE CIRCLE REPRESENTS
5 JUNIOR BASIC SCHOOLS
MURARAI
NALHATI
RAMPURHAT
MAYURESWAR
MAHAMMADBAZAR
RAJNAGAR
SURI
SAINTHIA
LABHPUR
KHAYRASOL
DUBRAJPUR
AJOY RIVER
BOLPUR
NANUR
ILLAMBAZAR
N
SCALE
MILES 2 0 2 4 6 MILES
0 6 KM
REFERENCE
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
THANA BOUNDARY
RIVER
PREPARED BY
DILIP K. KHAN

	Name & address of the institution	Year of establishment	Year of receiving affiliation from the University of Calcutta as High School
1.	Birbhum Zillah School, Suri	1851	1857
2.	Barhra High English School, Barhra, P.S. Khayrasol	1858	1931
3.	Hetampur Raj H. E. School, Hetampur, P.S. Dubrajpur	1869	1872
4.	Bolpur H. E. School. Bolpur	1878	1878
5.	Rivers' Thompson Girls' High School, Suri	1884	1941
6.	Rai Bahadur Sedmull Dalmia High School. Dubrajpur	1885	1929
7.	Rampurhat High School, Rampurhat	1886	not known
8.	Chandpara High School. Chandpara, P.S. Rampurhat	1890	1950
9.	Sibchandra High School, Kirnahar, P.S. Nanur	1895	1898
10.	Rampurhat Girls' High School, Rampurhat	1900	1948
11.	Paikar High School, Paikar. P.S. Murarai	1900	1929

LITERACY

According to the Census 1971, a total of 4,69,694 persons out of 17,79,805 persons or 26.39 per cent of the total district population were found literate, that is, they could at least read and write a simple letter in any language. 3,22,590 males out of a total of 9,03,118 males, that is 35.72 per cent of males and 1,47,104 females out of a total of 8,76,687 or 16.77 per cent of females were found literate (that is, they could at least read and write a simple letter in any language) in the Census of 1971. The rate of literacy found in the district in March 1971 was below the all West Bengal averages for total male and female literacy which were respectively 33.05 per cent of total

population, 42.84 per cent of male population and 22.08 per cent of female population.

The table below indicates the volume of the growth of literacy in the district in each tenth year since 1901 in percentage terms, that is, in terms of the number of literate persons, males and females in each one hundred persons, males and females.

Year	Literates per 100 Persons	Males	Females
1901	7.72	15.25	0.41
1911	8.75	17.02	0.63
1921	10.24	19.46	1.06
1931	6.92	12.80	1.05
1941	12.76	21.44	4.07
1951	17.74	28.22	6.80
1961	22.09	32.43	11.47
1971	26.39	35.72	16.77

The next table gives an idea of the changing relation between the percentage of literates in the district and the State of West Bengal since 1951.

	Literates per 100					
	Persons		Males		Females	
Year	Birbhum	West Bengal	Birbhum	West Bengal	Birbhum	West Bengal
1951	17 74	21.54	28.22		6.80	
1961	22.09	29.28	32.43	40.08	11.47	16.98
1971	26.39	33.05	35.72	42.84	16.77	22.08

The proportion of literate persons to total population and of literate males to total male population and literate females to total female population differed significantly in the rural and urban areas. The proportion of literates to total population and of literate males and females to total male and female population also varied widely in different sub-divisions and police station areas of the district. The following table, based on the Census of 1961, gives an indication of distribution of literates in different administrative units and urban and rural areas of the district.

Administrative Unit	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Literates per 100		
		Persons	Males	Females
West Bengal State	T	29.28	40.08	16.98
	R	21.64	32.86	9.73
	U	52.89	59.59	43.33
Birbhum District	T	22.09	32.43	11.47
	R	20.55	30.75	10.18
	U	42.62	53.17	30.12
Suri Sadar Subdivision	T	23.54	34.19	12.53
	R	21.74	32.29	10.97
	U	43.26	53.59	31.05
Suri Police Station	T	27.98	38.21	17.10
	R	21.31	31.23	11.19
	U	52.10	61.25	40.79
Rajnagar ,, ,,	T(R)	20.90	32.34	9.18
Mahammad Bazar ,,	T(R)	18.86	28.42	9.11
Dubrajpur ,,	T	20.88	31.80	9.74
	R	19.03	29.46	8.46
	U	32.03	45.47	17.65
Khayrasol ,, ,,	T(R)	23.71	36.59	10.48
Ilambazar ,, ,,	T(R)	19.21	29.44	8.86
Bolpur ,, ,,	T	27.79	37.34	17.55
	R	23.30	32.49	13.75
	U	44.80	54.54	30.10
Labhpur ,, ,,	T(R)	23.96	34.86	13.02
Nanur ,, ,,	T(R)	23.78	34.42	12.03
Rampurhat Subdivision	T	19.94	29.79	9.90
	R	18.85	28.54	9.05
	U	40.99	52.09	27.76
Rampurhat Police Station	T	24.77	35.66	13.52
	R	22.29	32.93	11.52
	U	43.98	55.21	30.47
Mayureswar Police Station	T(R)	21.37	32.68	9.90
Murarai Police Station	T(R)	13.18	19.62	6.62
Nalhati Police Station	T	19.35	29.88	8.69
	R	18.37	28.82	7.90
	U	34.13	44.84	21.63

LEVELS OF EDUCATION

The term literate is broad enough to include persons who can just read and write simple letters in their respective mother tongue

to persons with the highest possible educational attainments. It is therefore necessary to further break up the category to get an idea about the extent of spread of education among the populace.

The following statement, based on the Census of 1961, gives an idea about the levels of educational attainments of the population of Birbhum district.

		Educated up to Primary or Junior Basic level		Educated up to Matriculation and above	
	Total	Absolute Number	Percentage of total	Absolute Number	Percentage of total
Persons	14,46,158	1,15,305	7.9	18,647	1.3
Males	7,32,922	91,047	12.4	17,327	2.3
Females	7,13,236	24,258	3.6	1,320	0.2

This is a rather dismal picture. But however dismal a picture it may be, if it shows any sign of movement towards better situation, there is nothing to despair. But unfortunately for us, the earlier censuses do not provide any comparable data by comparing which we could have an idea about the direction of the trend. In the absence of such comparable data, if it could be shown that comparatively more persons in lower age groups are found to be educated than are found in higher age groups it can be inferred that gradually more and more persons are getting educational facilities. The statement below pertains to age-groupwise distribution of educated people in the district as they were found in March 1961.

Age group	Total persons in the age group		Educated up to Primary or Junior Basic Level		Educated up to Matriculation & above level	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
0 — 9	2,43,538	2,43,004	2,713	1,088	..	..
10 — 19	1,26,663	1,16,836	35,023	12,096	2,134	349
20 — 29	1,14,680	1,23,445	20,714	5,550	7,096	640
30 — 59	2,13,710	1,92,439	28,341	4,162	7,000	310
60 +	33,929	37,261	4,229	361	1,090	21

A close reading of the table provides the following information:

Each single year on an average in the age group	Up to Primary: Persons per 100 in each age year on average		Up to Matriculation & above: Persons per 100 in each age year	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0—9	11.1	0.4	..	..
10—19	27.6	10.3	1.6	0.3
20—29	18.1	4.5	6.1	0.5
30—59	13.1	2.1	3.2	0.2

Now, educated persons in the district are not equitably distributed over urban and rural areas of the district. As is to be expected, educated persons seem to be concentrated in the urban areas. The table below, prepared from the data provided by the Census of 1961, gives a picture of distribution of people with different levels of education in the urban and rural areas of the district, as percentages of total male and total female populations in rural and urban areas of the district.

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES & FEMALES OF DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS IN RURAL & URBAN AREAS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT IN 1961

Educational level	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	69.25	89.82	46.83	69.88
Literate without education	17.01	7.11	25.49	19.06
Primary or Junior Basic	12.05	2.97	16.99	9.70
Matriculation & above	1.69	0.10	—	—
Matriculation or Higher Secondary	—	—	6.14	0.79
Graduation, Post-Graduate, Technical degrees and Technical & non-Technical diplomas	—	—	4.55	0.57

To make the figures in percentage given in the aforementioned table more tangible, some figures in absolute numbers may be given. These figures reflect the situation in urban areas only, is so far as it concerned the situation up to March 1961.

	Male	Female
University Graduation & Post Graduate degrees, other than Technical degrees	950	102
Graduation & above degree in Engineering	29	nil
Graduation & above degree in Medicine	76	2
Graduation & above degree in Agriculture	2	nil
Graduation & above degree in Veterinary & Dairying	2	nil
Graduation & above degree in Teaching	35	8
Graduation & above degree in Miscellaneous Technology	3	nil

Primary Education

The table given below, prepared from the data provided by West Bengal Directorate of Education, will give an idea about the progress of Primary education in the district of Birbhum.

	Primary		Junior Basic	
Each quinquennial year	No. of institutions	No. of pupils	No. of institutions	No. of pupils
1945-46	636	42,625	Had not come into existence	
1950-51	694	55,426	ditto	
1955-56	1,130	88,807	24	4,729
1960-61	1,200	88,435	133	15,662
1967-68	1,362	1,02,315	169	17,991

In the year 1947 Primary education was made free in the rural areas of the district and all the Primary schools hitherto receiving grant-in-aid from the Government through the District School Board, came under the management and supervision of the Board. Yet after three years, in 1951 it was found that only about 21.6 per cent of the population of 5-14 years age group was actually attending the Primary schools. After ten years, in 1961 it was found that the number of students attending various Primary and Junior Basic schools accounted for about 29.8 per cent of the total number of persons in the age group of 5-14 years, the male

students accounting for 37.0 per cent of the males and female students for 22.0 per cent of the girls of the aforementioned age group.

The District School Board incurred the following expenditure for maintaining the Primary and Junior Basic schools of the district, at current prices.

Year	For stipends	Primary schools	Junior Basic schools
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1955-56	960	26,21,158	5,52,736
1960-61	790	32,06,981	7,79,942
1965-66	4,720	49,80,154	9,41,272
1967-68	4,992	76,55,443	14,94,388

The Primary and the Junior Basic schools were distributed in the following manner in different thana areas of the district in 1967-68.

Name of the Thana	No. of Primary schools	No. of Junior Basic schools
Rampurhat (Rural)	157	14
-do- (Urban)	9	1
Murarai (Rural)	104	7
Nalhati (Rural)	144	5
Mayureswar (Rural)	127	9
Bolpur (Rural)	66	30
-do- (Urban)	3	9
Labhpur (Rural)	101	8
Nanur (Rural)	100	8
Ilambazar (Rural)	78	5
Dubrajpur (Rural)	86	13
Khayrasol (Rural)	68	16
Rajnagar (Rural)	45	9
Suri (Rural)	94	10
-do- (Urban)	8	4
Mahammad Bazar (Rural)	70	10
Sainthia (Rural)	102	11
Total	1,362	169

Secondary Education

Formerly, there were two types of Secondary schools, namely the Middle English schools imparting education either up to Class VI or Class VIII and Higher English schools imparting training up to Class X and then sending their pupils for the Entrance and later the Matriculation Examination of the Univesity of Calcutta or still later the School Final Examination of the Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal. After the introduction of XI-class system of Higher Secondary education, there are now five types of secondary schools. First, there are the VI-class Junior High schools on the process of being converted into VIII-class Junior High schools. Secondly, there are the VIII-class Junior High schools. Thirdly, there are the VIII-class Senior Basic schools, which were set up in accordance with a scheme of giving an alternative system of education, based on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of education. These schools are supposed to take in students coming up from the Junior Basic schools. Fourthly, there are the X-class High schools on the process of being converted into XI-class Higher Secondary schools and lastly there are the XI-class Higher Secondary schools.

The table in Appendix to this chapter, prepared from the data provided by the Directorate of Education, West Bengal, gives an idea of the progress of Secondary education in the district from 1945-46 onwards.

It should be noted that in 1962-63, there were 104 Junior High schools in the district of which 54 were VIII-class Junior High schools and the rest were VI-class Junior High schools. Of the 107 Junior High schools in existence in 1960-61, 93 were proper Junior High schools and the remaining 14 were Senior Basic schools. In 1960-61, altogether 8,568 pupils were there on the rolls of the Junior High schools and 1,009 pupils were being taught at the Senior Basic schools.

The following table gives an idea about the management pattern and source of finance of the schools in the district.

Category of schools	Total No.	Govt. managed	Managed by Local Self Govt.	Private, Govt. aided	Private & unaided
Higher Secondary					
1950-51	—	—	—	—	—
1960-61	25	1	—	24	—

Category of schools	Total No.	Govt. managed	Managed by Local Self Govt.	Private, Govt. aided	Private & unaided
High school					
1950-51	34	1	—	31	2
1960-61	43	—	—	43	—
Middle English					
1950-51	69	—	—	66	3
Junior High					
1960-61	93	—	—	83	10
Senior Basic					
1960-61	14	—	—	14	—
Primary					
1950-51	694	8	676	10	—
1960-61	1,200	16	1,175	9	—
Junior Basic					
1960-61	133	—	131	2	—

In March 1963, there were 10 Junior High and Senior Basic schools in Suri police station area of which 2 were within the urban area. There were 1 Junior High school in Rajnagar thana area, 8 in Mahammad Bazar thana, 10 in Sainthia thana, 8 in Dubrajpur thana, 6 in Khayrasol thana, 5 in Ilambazar thana, 6 in Bolpur thana, 7 in Labhpur thana, 5 in Nanur thana, 13 in Mayureswar thana, 19 in Rampurhat thana, and 11 in Nalhati thana. There were also 10 Junior High and Senior Basic schools in Murarai police station area. It will be readily seen from this list that there was a greater concentration of Junior High and Senior Basic schools in Rampurhat Subdivision.

Of the 93 Junior High schools, 86 were meant for boys and 7 for girls. Of the 86 boys' schools 44 were VI-class schools and 42 VIII-class schools. 4 of the girls' schools were VI-class schools and the remaining 3 were VIII-class schools.

Given below is a list of High and Higher Secondary schools in Birbhum district. The schools have been arranged according to their location in particular police station area, so that the reader can get an idea about the thanawise distribution of these schools. The letters R & M within brackets indicate whether

the school is located within a village or a municipal area. At the beginning many of the schools were either Primary or Middle English institutions or as some of them were, unrecognized institutions. The last column provides information about the year in which each of them got recognition by the University of Calcutta and/or the Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal as a High or Higher Secondary school.

Sl. No.	Name of the school	Location	Year of origin	Year of recognition by C.U. or SEB
SURI POLICE STATION:				
1.	Birbhum Zillah School	Suri town (M)	1851	1857 C.U.
2.	Suri P. & C. M. M. School	-do-	1856	1953 S.E.B.
3.	Rivers Thompson Girls' High School	-do-	1884	1941 C.U.
4	Purandarpur High School	Purandarpur (R)	1895	1957 S.E.B.
5.	Benimadhav Institution	Suri town (M)	1917	1918 C.U.
6.	Abinashpur Sriram High School	Sultanpur (R)	1925	1926 C.U.
7.	Itagoria High School	Itagoria (R)	1949	1959 S.E.B.
8.	Alunda High School	Bara Alunda (R)	1950	1957 S.E.B.
9.	Nagari High School	Nagari (R)	1953	1959 S.E.B.
10.	Suri Ramakrishna Vidyapith	Suri town (M)	1955	1955 S.E.B.
RAJNAGAR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Tantipara Higher Secondary School	Tantipara (R)	1918	1945 C.U.
2.	Bhabanipur High School	Bhabanipur (R)	1935	1956 S.E.B.
3.	Rajnagar High School	Rajnagar (R)	1949	1951 C.U.
4.	Madhaipur Higher Secondary School	Madhaipur (R)	1952	1957 S.E.B.

Sl. No.	Name of the school	Location	Year of origin	Year of recognition by C.U. or SEB
MAHAMMAD BAZAR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Kaijuli Higher Secondary School	Kaijuli (R)	1934	1942 C.U.
2.	Kedarpur High School	Angargaria (R)	1939	1959 S.E.B.
SAINTHIA POLICE STATION:				
1.	Sainthia High School	Sainthia (NMT)	1928	1929 C.U.
2.	Ahmadpur J. D. High School	Ahmadpur (R)	1933	1935 C.U.
3.	Banagram High School	Banagram (R)	1953	1962 S.E.B.
4.	Sainthia Town High School	Sainthia (NMT)	1954	1962 S.E.B.
DUBRAJPUR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Hetampur Raj Higher Secondary School	Hetampur (R)	1869	1872 U.C.
2.	Dubrajpur R.B.S.D. High School	Dubrajpur (R)	1885	1929 C.U.
3.	Dubrajpur Sarada Vidyapith	-do-	1952	1957 S.E.B.
4.	Dubrajpur Girls' High School	-do-	1954	1961 S.E.B.
5.	Jalpai High School	Jalpai (R)	1954	1956 S.E.B.
KHAYRASOL POLICE STATION:				
1.	Barhra High School	Barhra (R)	1858	1931 C.U.
2.	Nakraconda High School	Birjuri (R)	1903	1903 C.U.
3.	Lokpur High School	Lokpur (R)	1953	1957 S.E.B.
4.	Panchra Higher Secondary School	Panchra (R)	1954	1955 S.E.B.

Sl. No.	Name of the school	Location	Year of origin	Year of recognition by C.U. or SEB
ILAMBAZAR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Ghurisa High School	Ghurisa (R)	1947	1956 S.E.B.
2.	Janubazar High School	Janubazar (R)	1951	1956 S.E.B.
3	Batikar High School	Batikar (R)	1955	1958 S.E.B.
4.	Ilambazar High School	Ilambazar (R)	1956	1956 S.E.B.
BOLPUR POLICE STATION				
1.	Bolpur Boys' High School	Bolpur town (M)	1878	1878 C.U.
2.	Bolpur Girls' High School	-do-	1905	1950 C.U.
3.	Bahiri Brajasundari High School	Bahiri (R)	1943	1945 C.U.
4	Bandhgora Higher Secondary School	Bandhgora (R)	1945	1955 S.E.B.
5.	Trisulapatti High School	Bolpur town (M)	1958	1959 S.E.B.
LABHPUR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Labhpur High School	Mohugram (R)	1901	1902 C.U.
2.	Kurunnahar High School	Kurunnahar (R)	1918	1947 C.U.
3	Kurumba Mukundalal High School	Kurumba (R)	1942	1951 C.U.
4	Hatkuluha High School	Hatkuluha (R)	1955	1960 S.E.B.
NANUR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Kirnahar Sibchandra High School	Kirnahar (R)	1895	1898 C.U.

Sl. No.	Name of the school	Location	Year of origin	Year of recognition by C.U. or SEB
NANUR POLICE STATION: *(Contd.)*				
2.	Khujutipara High School	Khujutipara (R)	1930	1930 C.U.
3.	Daskalgram High School	Daskalgram (R)	1931	1959 S.E.B.
4.	Nanur Chandidas High School	Chandidas-Nanur (R)	1937	1944 C.U.
5	Beluti High School	Beluti (R)	1951	1959 S.E.B.
6.	Kirnahar Girls' High School	Kirnahar (R)	1954	1961 S.E.B.
MAYURESWAR POLICE STATION:				
1.	Mayureswar High School	Muyureswar (R)	1908	1957 S.E.B.
2.	Kundola High School	Kundola (R)	1918	1919 C.U.
3.	Mallarpur High School	Mallarpur (R)	1928	1929 C.U.
4.	Lokepara High School	Lokepara (R)	1950	1955 S.E.B.
5.	Jamalpur High School	Jamalpur (R)	1954	1962 S.E.B.
6.	Kanutia High School	Kanutia (R)	1955	1961 S.E.B.
RAMPURHAT POLICE STATION:				
1.	Rampurhat High School	Rampurhat town (M)	1886	not known
2.	Chandpara High School	Chandpara (R)	1890	1950 C.U.
3.	Rampurhat Girls' High School	Rampurhat town (M)	1900	1948 C.U.
4.	Bishnupur High School	Bishnupur (R)	1918	1919 C.U.
5.	Shyampahari High School	Mrityunjay-pur (R)	1951	1957 S.E.B.
6.	Rampurhat J L. High School	Rampurhat town (M)	1955	1957 S.E.B.

Sl. No.	Name of the school	Location	Year of origin	Year of recognition by C.U. or SEB
NALHATI POLICE STATION:				
1.	Nalhati Higher Secondary School	Nalhati (R)	1917	1925 C.U.
2.	Mitrabhum High School	Kurumgram (R)	1918	1921 C.U.
3.	Lohapur Higher Secondary School	Lohapur (R)	1940	1942 C.U.
4.	Bhadrapur High School	Bhadrapur (R)	1947	1953 S.E.B.
MURARAI POLICE STATION				
1.	Paikar High School	Paikar (R)	1900	1929 C.U.
2.	Rajgaon High School	Rajgaon (R)	1927	1956 S.E.B.
3.	Murarai A. K. Institution	Murarai (R)	1940	1942 C.U.
4.	Bonha High School	Bonha (R)	1949	1953 S.E.B.
5	Chatra High School	Chatra (R)	1949	1951 C.U.
6.	Edrakpur High School	Edrakpur (R)	1951	1962 S.E.B.

Out of the total of 70 institutions of final Secondary education, 27 were XI-class Higher Secondary schools and 43 were X-class High schools in 1963. Excepting Birbhum Zillah (Higher Secondary) school which is fully financed and managed by Government, all other High and Higher Secondary schools are under private management receiving grants-in-aid from the State Government.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

Krishna Chandra College, Hetampur

Krishna Chandra College at Hetampur, founded by Maharani Padmasundari Devi of the Hetampur Rajbati, in 1896, to commemorate the memory of her father-in-law is the first institution for post-secondary education to be established in the district. This college also claims the distinction of being the first institution

of post-secondary education to be established in the rural areas of West Bengal. In 1897, the college became affiliated to the University of Calcutta with powers to train students for the First Arts, later the Intermediate in Arts examination of the said university. In 1928, the college was raised to the status of a degree college with powers to impart instructions to the pupils preparing for the Bachelor of Arts examination of the University of Calcutta. In 1945, the college got permission to conduct Intermediate in Science classes and from 1958 the college has been imparting instructions to pupils preparing for Bachelor in Science examination. After the coming into being of the Burdwan University as a federative university, the college, like other colleges in the district, has come under the jurisdiction of the Burdwan University, in so far as the syllabus, degree, etc. are concerned.

The college owes its early existence to the Hetampur Raj family, Maharani Padmasundari Devi instituted a Trust known as Brajabala Trust with funds made available to her by her husband Maharaja Ramaranjan Chakravarti for the maintenance of the college. The representatives of the Trust are still on the committee for the management. The college is now one of the colleges sponsored by the Department of Education, Government of West Bengal.

It is a co-educational college, and is housed in its own buildings, situated on a spacious campus. It has nine hostels for resident male students, of which two are located in buildings owned by the college. The college library has a collection of 12,151 books and the average yearly acquisition is about 390 volumes.

Suri Vidyasagar College, Suri

Suri Vidyasagar College started functioning at Suri town from March 1942 as a branch of Vidyasagar Institute, Calcutta, the Womens' Section of which was forced to close down earlier as a result of mass exodus from Calcutta for fear of bombing. The college started with the books, laboratory equipments and furniture of the Womens' Section of Vidyasagar Institute, Calcutta. In 1948 the college separated itself from the parent body and became affiliated to the University of Calcutta as Suri Vidyasagar College. From the very inception the college had been admitting students to I.A., I.Sc., and B.A. degree courses. In 1952-53 it got permission to introduce B.Sc. degree course. In 1955-56 the college opened classes to impart instructions to pupils preparing for the degree of Bachelor of Commerce.

The college is one of the Govenment sponsored institutions, depending mainly on the funds provided by the Education Depart-

ment of the Government of West Bengal. It is affiliated to the Burdwan University.

It is a co-educational institution and functions in three shifts. The day shift is there since the inception catering to the needs of the students in University Entrance, Arts and Science and B.A. courses. The evening shift, in existence since 1955-56, is meant only for students taking the B.Com. course. The Morning shift provides facilities to students in B.A. and B.Sc. Pass courses.

The college is housed in building owned by the institution and has a spacious campus. Three of the nine hostels, meant for the male resident students, are housed in buildings owned by the college. The college library has 12, 672 volumes in its collection and the yearly acquisition stands at 300 volumes on an average.

Bolpur College, Bolpur

Bolpur College was established in the year 1950 under a scheme drawn up by the Education Department of the Government of West Bengal to provide employment opportunities to college teachers who had immigrated from East Pakistan as refugees as also to provide the evacuee students with opportunities to continue their studies.

At the beginning, the college had university affiliation only to conduct Intermediate classes in Arts and Science subjects. The college got its affiliation to conduct classes for B.A. degree in 1956, B.Sc. course was introduced in 1959 only.

The college is a co-educational institution and is housed in its own buildings situated on a reasonably spacious campus. The college has hostel for male resident students only.

Rampurhat College, Rampurhat

Rampurhat College, like Bolpur College, was established in 1950 under the 'Dispersal Scheme' of the Education Department of Government of West Bengal. Like Bolpur College again, in 1957 the institution was brought under the scheme of Government-sponsored college. The college got its first affiliation as an Intermediate college with facilities to instruct students in Arts and Science subjects. With the opening of B.A. course in 1957-58, the college was raised to the status of a degree college. Degree classes in Science subjects were started in 1959-60. A commerce course leading to the B.Com degree was also introduced in 1963-64.

The college functions in three shifts. The day shift, in existence from the very inception, offers University Entrance courses in Arts and Science and graduate degree courses in Arts and Science (B.A. and B.Sc. respectively). The morning shift offers the same courses and the evening shift offers University Entrance course in Com-

merce and degree course in Commerce (B.Com.). The College is a co-educational institution and is housed in its own buildings. Out of the three hostels meant for male resident students, only one is owned by the college.

Abhedananda Mahavidyalaya

Abhedananda Mahavidyalaya at Sainthia was established in 1965 and got affiliated to Burdwan University in the same year. The college is a Government-sponsored institution and offers University Entrance, Arts and Science courses and degree courses in Arts and Science subjects (B.A. and B.Sc. respectively).

The college is housed in its own building and has a hostel for resident male students.

In 1951-52, the number of pupils in the four colleges of the district stood at 881 of whom 785 were males and 96 females. In 1960-61, the number of students had risen to 1,045 with the addition of only one college over the number of institutions existing in 1951-52. Of the 1,045 students in the rolls of six colleges in the district, 926 were males and 119 were females. The increase in number of students in colleges in the next eight years was more than five times. In 1968-69, it was found that a total of 6,869 students was on the rolls of the six colleges in the district; of this number 5,989 were males and 880 were females.

In 1960-61, altogether 113 teachers were taking care of 1,045 students in the six colleges. In 1968-69, a total of 175 members of the teaching staff in the six colleges was trying to cope with 6,869 students.

Technical education

The Ramakrishna Mission Silpa Vidyapith, Suri, a government-sponsored polytechnic institution imparts instructions in various branches of engineering leading to licentiate diplomas to students who are at least matriculates.

The district has a few craft training schools, which impart vocational training to students having general education less than matriculation (or School Final or Higher Secondary standard). Students are drawn mainly from the artisan castes or from the lower middle class families of urban and rural areas.

In 1945-46, there was no technical (craft training) school in the district. The condition continued to be the same in 1950-51. In 1951-52, however, 6 craft and vocational schools came into existence. 5 of these were imparting instructions in weaving and dyeing. The technical school at Ratanpur imparted instructions in smithy, carpentry, masonry, etc. A total of 80 pupils were getting instructions in those 6 craft and vocational schools. In

1955-56, the number of technical schools in existence in the district was increased to 7 and a total of 125 pupils was found on the rolls of these institutions. By 1960-61, however, one of these was closed down and it was found that the number stood at 6. The number of pupils at these schools had meanwhile increased to a total of 295 persons. 3 of these schools were managed and financed wholly by the Government of West Bengal while 3 were privately managed institutions receiving grants-in-aid from Government.

School for the physically handicapped

The Deaf and Dumb School at Suri is a privately managed institution receiving grants-in-aid from Government. Apart from the general department where pupils are given instruction for enabling them to sit for the School Final and/or the Higher Secondary examination, the school has a vocational and technical department to impart training in agriculture, horticulture, weaving, carpentry, smithy, tailoring and book-binding.

Social Education

After the Independence of the country, the Government of West Bengal embarked upon an integrated programme to do away with illiteracy and ignorance among the vast masses of rural people. The task was taken up by the Social Education Wing of the Education Department in collaboration with the Development Department. At first, the Adult Education Centres, Adult Literacy Centres, Night Schools and Social Education Centres were experimentally started in the Community Development Block areas. Then, with the expansion of National Extension Blocks in the district, the number of such centres increased. The following table gives information about the number of centres, pupils, expenditure after them and management pattern as those were in the district in 1962-63.

Type of centre	No.	No. of pupil	Expenditure	Management & source of finance
1. Adult Literacy Centre attached to jail	1	67	Rs. 1,574	Government
2. Adult Social Education Centre	177	8,594	Rs. 68,978	Private, Government-aided

	Type of centre	No.	No. of pupil	Expenditure	Management & source of finance
3.	Adult Female Education Centre	43	1,075	Rs. 11,024	Private, Government-aided
4.	Adult Literacy Centre (1 teacher unit)	23	1,469	Rs. 6,900	-ditto-
5.	Adult Night School	50	2,188	Rs. 6,000	-ditto-
6.	Unapproved Adult Night School	64	1,717	Rs. 6,628	Private, unaided

Library

Among the Libraries of the district the earliest to be established is Vivekananda Library. When established, the library was not known by its present name, which dates only from 1962. Previous to that year, the library carried the name of Ramaranjan Town Hall and Jubilee Library after the name of the donor of the land on which the library stands, namely Maharaja Ramaranjan Chakravarti of Hetampur Raj family. The library was opened in the year 1900. It has four subsidiaries, namely Gopinath Library, Rabindra Library, Birbhum Juvenile Library and Gandhi Memorial Study circle. Together the libraries have about 20,000 volumes at their disposal.

The Birbhum District Library at Suri was established on 15 August 1955. The management of this library rests with the Birbhum District Library Association, a subsidiary of the Bengal Library Association. The library has about 12,000 volumes at its disposal which are lent out to the 30 rural libraries, 390 general public libraries and 140 libraries for neo-literates in the district. The following statement gives a thanawise distribution of libraries in the rural and urban areas as well as the number of government-aided and unaided libraries and libraries with and without reading rooms per thana area.

THANAWISE DISTRIBUTION OF LIBRARIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1969

Name of the Thana	No of Libraries			No. of Govt.-aided Libraries	No. of unaided Libraries	No. of Libraries with reading room
	Total	Urban	Rural			
Suri	31	7	24	10	21	18
Sainthia	58	x	58	48	10	39
Rajnagar	18	x	18	2	16	3
Mahammad Bazar	26	x	26	18	8	21
Dubrajpur	32	x	32	26	6	29
Khayrasol	18	x	18	4	14	8
Ilambazar	20	x	20	3	17	10
Bolpur	35	1	34	15	20	18
Labhpur	30	x	30	25	5	11
Nanur	44	x	44	33	11	27
Rampurhat	36	1	35	10	26	9
Mayureswar	38	x	38	9	29	27
Nalhati	51	x	51	33	18	51
Murarai	41	x	41	31	10	19

Physical Education

In the year 1926, the then Government of Bengal launched a programme in the district to impart physical education in a planned way to the students in schools and colleges and for that purpose created the post of a District Organizer of Physical Education. To further extend the scope of physical education, so that the benefits of physical education, sports and athletics may reach even the youths outside schools and colleges, Government set up a District Youth Welfare Council in 1938. The Council was empowered to assist the voluntary organizations everywhere in the district engaged in sports and athletics. After the Independence, in 1957, the District Organizer of Physical Education and the District Youth Welfare Council were replaced by the District Officer of Physical Education and Youth Welfare and his office to look after the enlarged needs of physical education, games, sports, athletics and para-military training imparted to the students in schools and colleges.

The District Office of Physical Education and Youth Welfare promotes physical culture by providing financial grants to the voluntary associations and clubs etc. affiliated to the Birbhum District Body Building and Weight Lifting Association, Bolpur and to the schools and colleges for construction of gymnasiums and purchase of equipments. It also provides facilities for the training of leaders in the field by organizing coaching camps and by sending out trained coaches. For this purpose, the Government spent Rs. 2,197 in 1955-56, Rs. 14,754 in 1960-61, Rs. 5,850 in 1965-66 and Rs. 750 in 1967-68.

The District Office of Physical Education and Youth Welfare promotes organized games and sports by providing financial assistance to the sports and games associations and clubs affiliated to the Birbhum District Sports Association, Suri, Birbhum District Volleyball Association, Rampurhat and Birbhum District Kabadi Association, Ahmadpur and to the schools and colleges affiliated to the Birbhum District School Sports Association, Suri. Coaches are assigned by the Government from time to time to train up players and pick up talents for further coaching. Inter-club, inter-school and inter-district competitions in different games and athletics are arranged each year by the District Office of Physical Education and Youth Welfare. For activities in these fields the Government expenditure in 1955-56 amounted to Rs. 6,899, in 1960-61 to Rs. 30,932, in 1965-66 to Rs. 6,975 and in 1967-68 to Rs. 6,815.

There is a District Youth Welfare Council which encourages leisure time organized activities of urban and rural youths in the district in various fields of sports, games and athletics, through the voluntary associations affiliated to it. The council encourages these healthy youthful activities by providing grants-in-aid to its affiliated organizations. The Government expenditure incurred through the District Welfare Council of Birbhum amounted to Rs. 47,441 in 1955-56, to Rs. 14,754 in 1960-61, to Rs. 16,606 in 1965-66 and to Rs. 5,486 in 1967-68.

Preliminary para-military training meant for boys in schools was introduced, through the Junior Division of the National Cadet Corps in the district in 1948-49. To start with, it was introduced in only six High English Schools in the district. In 1967-68, the Junior Division National Cadet Corps training facilities were available to the students in 23 High and Higher Secondary Schools of the district. Para-military training is compulsory for the male students in colleges, for girls it is optional; boys can, however,

get exemption on grounds of health. In 1967-68, it was found that only about 45% of the total strength of male students in the colleges in Birbhum were taking training under the Senior Division of the National Cadet Corps, and there was no facility for even the willing female students of colleges in the district, as the number of such willing girl students were too few to maintain any unit. The number of male students participating in the Senior Division National Cadet Corps in the district and the geographical factor of the location of colleges have necessitated the establishment of two battalion headquarters in the district.

VISVA-BHARATI SANTINIKETAN-SRINIKETAN

The account of education and culture so far given does not include Visva-Bharati, its institutions and the people connected with it, nor does the account give any idea about the place of Visva-Bharati in the cultural life not only of the district but of Bengal as a whole.

Visva-Bharati has grown out of Santiniketan Asrama founded in 1863 by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, poet Rabindranath Tagore's father, in the vicinity of the then mauzas of Bolpur, Bhubandanga, Taltore and Surul. The site was a green spot in the middle of an open country of barren undulations, called *khoai* in local parlance. Later, he made a gift of the land with a building and a temple (temple for congregational prayers addressed by the sons and daughters of the Almighty who is one, indivisible, omnipresent and without form) to a trust, so that the seekers of Truth, irrespective of their formal religious affiliations, caste, creed, sect and colour, could come and meditate in peace and seclusion.

In December 1901, poet Rabindranath Tagore started a school at the site with only five students on the roll. The school, Brahmacharyasrama was modelled on the *tapovana* schools of the ancient time. The school was a reaction against the soulless, joyless and mechanical system of education designed to produce clerks and technicians necessary for running modern bureaucratic-technocratic state. The Government of the time was positively hostile towards the experiments in education poet Tagore was carrying out at Brahmacharyasrama. The school never became a financially sound institution. Nevertheless, the poet could attract a band of dedicated scholars for teaching at the school, among whom mention should be made of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, Satischandra Ray, Mohitchandra Sen, Ajitkumar Chakrabarti, Jagadananda Ray, Kshitimohan Sen Sastri, Vidhusekhar Bhattacharya Sastri, Haricharan Bandyopadhyaya, Santoshchandra Majumdar,

Kalimohan Ghosh, Nepalchandra Roy, Dinendranath Tagore and Asitkumar Haldar. In 1912, Tagore went to Europe and secured the services of Dinabandhu C. F. Andrews and W. W. Pearson for his school. Andrews later became the link between Mahatma Gandhi and the poet. Mahatma Gandhi's association with Santiniketan began in 1914, when on his return from South Africa, Gandhiji came to stay in Santiniketan with the students of his Phoenix School, who on coming to Santiniketan, became the students of Brahmacharya Vidyalaya.

On the eve of his departure for Europe in 1912, Tagore inaugurated the Santiniketan Asramik Sangha (Association of Ex-students) with the object to enlist public sympathy and support for his work in Santiniketan which was in dire need for such support and sympathy. With the same intention, Tagore supported the establishment of Vichitra, a literary and cultural society in Calcutta in 1914. Both these organizations were engaged, albeit, in fund-raising operations for the school at Santiniketan. Vichitra became the precursor of the Visva-Bharati Society.

Rabindranath knew, from his long association with the peasantry of Bengal, that one of the chief drawbacks of our rural life was the lack of education. On the other hand, he also knew that the principal defect of education, meant for higher classes, had been its total divorce from productive activity and life at the grass-root level. One of the main objectives of Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy was to promote the spirit of enquiry in the receiver by providing him with questions relevant to him as a man among men and nature around him. In order to make such an education relevant to the masses of agriculturists and artisans, Tagore purchased a big house with 25 acres of land at Surul village, one and a half miles to the west of Santiniketan: this village was to become Sriniketan, four years later, the seat of Institute for Rural Reconstruction or Palli Saṁgathana Vibhaga. In Leonard K. Elmhirst and Kalimohan Ghosh, Tagore found two able organizers who helped to put Sriniketan on its feet.

Tagore's idea was that the education available in the land, in the first place, was unsuitable for children in the schools, as it did not mean to develop a spirit of enquiry and the mental and ethical faculties in children. Secondly, the education had no practical use for the people in their endeavours to survive in the world as economically, socially and spiritually better men; and lastly, the education was totally rootless and dehumanized. To do away with the first two ills, Tagore laid emphasis on primary

and secondary education provided in schools. The school department, therefore, received his first attention. To meet the challenge, partly of the second and of the third drawbacks, of the colonial system of education and to lay a solid foundation for his ideal of universalist-humanist patriotism, Tagore wanted to promote research activities in the fields of comparative religion, philosophy, language and literature with special emphasis on Eastern philosophy, religions, languages and literature. From 1919 arrangements were made for providing courses of higher studies in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and later on in Tibetan, Chinese, Persian, Oriya and Hindi literatures and languages, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Zoroastrian and Islamic philosophy and theology. This department of higher studies and research was soon to be formalised into what later became Vidya-Bhavana. Besides the qualified scholars in his staff like Ajit Kumar Chakrabarti, Amiya Chakrabarty, Kshitimohan Sen Sastri, Vidhusekhar Sastri and Haricharan Bandyopadhyaya, Tagore invited internationally famous Indologists, Sinologists and Orientalists like Sylvain Lévi, Maurice Winternitz, V. Lesny, Sten Konow, Carlo Formichi, G. Tucci, M. Collins, L. Bogdanov, F. Benoit, Andree Karpalees, Stella Kramrisch, Pour-E-Daveed, Julius Germanus, H. Timbers, J. B. Pratt, Tan-Yun-San and others as visiting fellows and professors to Vidya-Bhavana.

Music and visual arts had always had very important place in Tagore's scheme of education meant to develop sensual, perceptual, conceptual, spiritual and social faculties of the individual man. Rabindranath had introduced courses in visual arts in the Brahmacharya Vidyalaya with Asit Kumar Haldar as the teacher in charge. In 1919, Kala-Bhavana was established as a school for visual arts and music with Nandalal Bose in charge of the visual arts department and Dinendranath Tagore and Bhimrao Sastri in charge of the music department.

Meanwhile, Tagore's ideas about education had undergone some change. His idea centred round the concept of the Universal Man. If a human individual has to attain the ideal of the Universal Man, he has got to be given an education which develops the talent potentialities of Universal Manhood in him. To make the conditions congenial for the emergence of the Universal Man, certain practical steps had to be taken. For giving those practical policies an institutional form, Tagore established Visva-Bharati.

The formal inauguration of Visva-Bharati took place in December 1921 at a meeting presided over by Brajendranath Seal.

Since then, Santiniketan has been the seat of Visva-Bharati. The motto of Visva-Bharati, "*Yatra viśvam bhavatyekanīḍam*" (where the diverse world finds one single nest as home) gives out the objective of the founding father, which may be summed up as follows:

The Asrama and its education system is to provide for free and unfettered inter-change of best of all religious and social cultures that had originated in the East and emphasised the commonness of their humane heritage.

The Asrama and its education system is to provide for its human residents an atmosphere where they can be in constant and conscious communion with nature of whose part they had always been unconsciously, without going in for the rustic mentality, and finally, Visva-Bharati is to seek ways and means to establish a living relationship between the East and the West, without the factor of domination intervening, to promote inter-racial and inter-communal harmony and intercultural understanding in accordance with an ideal of the unification of mankind.

Surendranath Tagore and Prasantachandra Mahalanobis jointly drafted the constitution of Visva-Bharati which was adopted and registered in May 1922. Rathindranath Tagore and Prasantachandra Mahalanobis were appointed the Karma-Sachivas or the Joint Secretaries of Visva-Bharati which now became the federative and administrative organization of all the institutions in Santiniketan and Sriniketan. Brahmacharya Vidyalaya or the school was renamed the Purva-Vibhaga and the institute of higher studies and research was named the Uttara-Vibhaga. This Uttara-Vibhaga later expanded its function and was consequently split into two around 1933. Of the split units, the institution catering for collegiate education up to graduation came to be known as Siksha-Bhavana, while the other one providing for post-graduate studies and research was named Vidya-Bhavana After Uttara-Vibhaga was split into two, Purva-Vibhaga was renamed Patha-Bhavana. In 1934, the music section was taken out of Kala-Bhavana and made a separate institution — Sangit-Bhavana, while the arts section retained its old name. In the late thirties, higher studies in Tibetology, Sinology and Hindi were taken out of Vidya-Bhavana proper and two new institutes were started with endowments received from different sources to provide for Tibetological, Sinological and Hindi studies at Cheena-Bhavana and Hindi-Bhavana respectively.

After the death of its founder Rabindranath Tagore in August 1941, Abanindranath Tagore became the Acharya of Visva-Bharati and continued to be so till 1947. To commemorate the memory of the founder, Rabindra-Bhavana was established in July 1942 as a research academy and memorial museum.

After the retirement of Abanindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu became the Acharya of Visva-Bharati, and held the office till her death in 1949 In 1948, Vinaya-Bhavana came into existence as an institution for the training of teachers in basic training schools.

After Sarojini Naidu's death, Jawaharlal Nehru became the Acharya of Visva-Bharati and he adorned the post till death. In May 1951, Visva-Bharati was declared an institution of national importance and was incorporated as a unitary, teaching and residential University by Act XXIX of 1951 of the Indian Parliament. Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed the first Acharya (Chancellor) and Rathindranath Tagore the first Upacharya (Vice-Chancellor) of the Central University. Though the University started functioning from 14 May 1951, it was formally inaugurated by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Education Minister of the Government of India in September 1951.

From its very inception, Visva-Bharati has been a co-educational complex of educational institutions. In this respect, it has done a pioneer's job in the country. In the field of management of educational institution also, Visva-Bharati can claim the distinction of being a pioneering institution in the country. From its very inception, the management of different institutions rested with the democratically elected body of teachers and other members of the staff responsible for carrying out day-to-day functions of the institutions. Democratically elected bodies of the students shared the responsibility of maintaining discipline amongst the students and attending to the problems of the students, along with the teachers.

Visva-Bharati University has three campuses: the campus in Santiniketan is the oldest and biggest; Sriniketan campus, some two miles to the west, has in the recent period grown to be fairly big and Vinaya-Bhavana campus, lying between Santiniketan and Sriniketan, is a single institution campus.

Given below is a campus-wise description of institutions:

ĀNANDA PĀTHSĀLĀ (Nursery School) established in 1952 is a nursery school run on the lines of Pre-Basic nursery schools. There is no residential arrangement for the students of Ananda

Pathsala. Students are mainly drawn from the homes of the people residing in Santiniketan and Sriniketan townships.

SISU-VIBHĀGA (Primary School), formally is a department of Patha-Bhavana, comprising the Primary classes of the school. It has grown out of Brahmacharya Vidyalaya — the earliest institution of Santiniketan from which Visva-Bharati itself has grown. There is a separate hostel for the residential male students of Sisu-Vibhaga. The residential girl students stay at the block in the Sri-Sadana reserved for the students of Patha-Bhavana.

PĀTHA-BHAVANA (Higher-Secondary School), formerly known as Brahmacharyasrama Vidyalaya (from 1921 as Purva-Vibhaga), this is the nucleus around which Visva-Bharati has grown. It provides instruction for the Higher School Certificate Examination in Humanities, Science, Fine Arts and Music, after completion of 11-year school course. Minimum age limit for admission is 6 plus and the upper age is 12 years. Residential male students live in the school hostel while the girls live in the block at the Sri-Sadana reserved for the school students.

SIKSHĀ-BHAVANA (College of Science) has grown out of Uttara-Vibhaga founded in 1921. Before Visva-Bharati became a University, the institution used to provide instructions to the students for the Intermediate in Arts and Bachelor of Arts of the University of Calcutta. As the College was not affiliated to the University of Calcutta, the students of Siksha-Bhavana were allowed to appear at the I.A. and B.A. examinations of Calcutta University as private candidates by a special arrangement. Siksha-Bhavana also provided instructions for the Adya, Madhya and Anta diplomas of Visva-Bharati. After Visva-Bharati became a Central University, the college became a full-fledged degree college in Arts and some natural Science subjects. Siksha-Bhavana also runs Certificate and Diploma courses in a number of languages. The college has hostels for residential male students. Residential female students live in a block at the Sri-Sadana meant for the college students. In accordance with the recommendations of the Faculty Structure Committee, Siksha-Bhavana became the college of Science, with Degree and Post Graduate courses in Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Zoology and Botany, in October 1972.

VIDYĀ-BHAVANA (College of Humanities) has, like Siksha-Bhavana, grown out of Uttara-Vibhaga. Indeed, the research division formed the nucleus of Uttara-Vibhaga in its earlier days. The founding father of Visva-Bharati — Rabindranath Tagore's educational ideas centred round the school and the research division.

The school was to build the character and motive ideas of the juvenile receiver of education and the research division was to inquire into the historical roots of systems of values governing the thoughts and actions of man in his march from particularity to universalism. From the very beginning, emphasis was placed on researches in the field of languages and literatures (Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Tibetan and Chinese in particular), philosophy & theology (the eight systems of Indian philosophy, Islamic theology and philosophy, Buddhist theology and philosophy in particular) and history of religion and culture (particularly of ancient and medieval India, Persia, China and Tibet). After Visva-Bharati became a university, Vidya-Bhavana began to conduct Post-Graduate classes in those subjects to which English and Economics were added later. A Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy is maintained out of funds provided by the University Grants Commission. In accordance with the recommendations of the Faculty Structure Committee, Vidya-Bhavana was transformed into a College of Humanities, with Degree and Post-Graduate courses in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Arabic, Persian & Islamic Studies, Bengali, Economics, English, History, Geography, Hindi, Oriya, Philosophy, Comparative Religion, Pali, Parkrit, Chinese, Japanese and Indo-Tibetan Studies in October, 1972.

CHEENA-BHAVANA was established in 1937 as a separate department within the fold of Vidya-Bhavana to conduct higher studies in Sinology and Tibetology with special emphasis on studies in Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese and Tibetan philosophy, Chinese and Tibetan cultural history and Chinese and Tibetan languages.

HINDI-BHAVANA was established around 1945 as another autonomous department within Vidya-Bhavana to conduct higher studies in Hindi literature and language.

THE AGRO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE EASTERN REGION OF INDIA, sponsored by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India, was established at Santiniketan as a research institute of Visva-Bharati University in 1954. The functions of the Centre comprise : (a) measurement of changes in rural economy of eastern India by means of rotating field surveys, (b) conducting *ad hoc* investigations into the problems of rural economy and society in which the Ministry of Food and Agriculture may be interested, (c) conducting research and investigation into the fundamental problems of rural economy and

(d) giving technical advice to the Government of India and of the States of the eastern India.

KALĀ-BHAVANA or the School of non-performing visual arts came into existence in 1919 and instantly became the centre of the so-called Bengal School which initiated the modern artistic activity in the country under the leadership of Abanindranath Tagore. Abanindranath's most original disciple Nandalal Bose assumed the charge of Kala-Bhavana on its establishment. For a long time, Kala-Bhavana had been providing instructions to students for (a) a two-year certificate course in artistic handicrafts and (b) a post-matriculation four-year diploma course in tempera-painting, water colour, drawing and modelling and sculpture. Recently, the college has introduced (a) a graduate degree course with a choice of subjects from a list comprising drawing and painting including oil medium, mural painting, graphic-print making, modelling and sculpture and history of art and (b) a post-graduate degree course in any one of the subjects listed above. Like all other institutions of the University, the Kala-Bhavana has a specialised library. Besides, the Kala-Bhavana has a museum, an exhibition gallery and a number of well-equipped studios. Like other teaching and research institutions of Visva-Bharati, the male residential students of Kala-Bhavana are housed in hostels within easy reach of the college, while the female residential students live in a separate block within Sri-Sadana.

SANGIT-BHAVANA or the School of music and dance was initially a department of Kala-Bhavana, headed by Dinendranath Tagore and Bhimrao Sastri. In 1934, the music and dance departments were taken out of Kala-Bhavana and were given an institutional form in Sangit-Bhavana. Here lessons are provided for four-year diploma course in Bengali music (mainly Rabindra Sangit, but also Kirtan, Baul and compositions by Atulprasad Sen, Rajani Kanta Sen and others); Hindusthani Classical Vocal Music; Hindusthani Classical Instrumental Music (Sitar, Esraj and Tabla); Manipuri and Kathakali styles of dance. This is a post-matriculation diploma course. Sangit-Bhavana has a specialised library, a few auditory studios and an auditorium. The male resident students are housed in separate hostels while the female resident students stay in a separate block within Sri-Sadana.

Besides the teaching and research institutions as listed above, there are a number of non-teaching and non-research organisations in Santiniketan. Among which mention should be made of :

RABINDRA-SADANA, which is a memorial museum and archive established in July 1942 to commemorate the haloed memory of the founder of Visva-Bharati, poet Rabindranath Tagore. The activity of Rabindra-Sadana is centred round the cluster of buildings in Uttarayana compound, comprising Udayana, Udichi, Syamali, Giriguha and others in all of which the poet stayed for some time or other. Rabindra-Sadana museum and archive houses the manuscripts of books and writings, paintings and drawings in reproduction and in original and personal belongings of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, including the gifts and presentations the poet received from innumerable persons and organizations at home and abroad. The archive also includes books by and on Rabindranath Tagore and his activities in original and in translations, letters addressed to Rabindranath by eminent contemporaries and photographs of the poet.

CENTRAL LIBRARY is accessible to the students, teachers and members of the staff of all Visva-Bharati institutions irrespective of their affiliation to any particular institution, unlike the institutional, departmental and seminar libraries which afford access to the students, teachers and members of the staff of the particular institution, department and seminar to which the reader or the borrower may belong. Visva-Bharati Central Library has some 1,50,000 volumes of printed books and 10,000 manuscripts in its collection. It has spacious reading rooms and borrowing facilities.

GRANTHANA-VIBHĀGA, established in 1923, is the publishing department of Visva-Bharati University. The headquarters of Visva-Bharati Granthana-Vibhaga is situated in Caucutta. The activities of Granthana-Vibhaga in Santiniketan centres round the Visva-Bharati Press. Apart from the Bengali, Hindi and English reprints of Rabindranath Tagore's works, the Granthana-Vibhaga carries out research in and publishes anthologies of Tagore's writings in fresh editions and notations of Tagore's musical compositions. The Granthana-Vibhaga also publishes books by dead and living authors in addition to those by Rabindranath or on Rabindranath. Visva-Bharati Ganthana-Vibhaga brings out two quarterly journals, the Visva-Bharati Quarterly in English and Visva-Bharati Patrika in Bengali. It also publishes the Annual Visva-Bharati Journal of Inter Departmental Study Circle and the monthly bulletin styled as the Visva-Bharati News.

PEARSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL for the inmates of Santiniketan and Sriniketan university townships has an outdoor section

equipped with a clinical laboratory and X'ray unit which caters to the medical needs of the villagers living around the university townships, in addition to the catering for the needs of the inmates. The indoor beds including those at the quarantine annexe are meant for the inmates of the University townships only. Services of an opthalmologist and a dentist are also available at the hospital. Sri-Sadana or the complex of girls' hostels has sick-rooms and quarantine rooms with well appointed dispensary and nurses.

Facilities for all common sports and games including foot-ball, cricket, hockey, basketball, volleyball, badminton and tennis are available to all the inmates of the two townships. There is a well equipped gymnasium at Santiniketan. A fairly good swimming pool is there to cater to the needs of students, teachers, ex-students and members of the staff interested in swimming and diving.

There is a general Guest House with separate dormitories for males and females, as also with separate double-bed rooms with baths attached. Apart from the general Guest House, there is a special guest house at Ratan-Kuthi meant for the guests of the university.

There are three auditoria with stages at Sinha-Sadana, Sangit-Bhavana and Vichitra and several large halls for lecture etc.

Moving westwards, midway between Santiniketan and Sriniketan is a single institution campus comprising Vinaya-Bhavana.

VINAYA-BHAVANA or the teachers' training college came into existence in September 1948 as a college for the training of (i) teachers of arts, crafts and music at the basic training schools and (ii) general teachers at the basic training schools. After Visva-Bharati became a statutory university, the college was raised to the status of a full fledged teachers' training college preparing students for the Bachelor of Training degree through a one-year post-graduate course in education. The male and female residential students live in separate hostels within the campus.

Moving further west, about two miles from Santiniketan, one reaches Sriniketan, lying on the road running from Bolpur to Suri. Sriniketan had once been a part of Mauza Surul, 25 acres of which along with a house was purchased by Tagore in 1918 with an idea to set up the Institute of Rural Reconstruction. But the poet had to wait till the arrival of Leonard K. Elmhirst

in 1922 for the formal inauguration of the Department for Rural Reconstruction of which Elmhirst became the first Director.

PALLI-SAṂGATHANA-VIBHĀGA or the Department of Rural Reconstruction is the parent organisation of all the institutions in Sriniketan co-ordinating the activities of all the educational institutions in Sriniketan with two objectives in mind, namely, (a) giving a realistc foundation to education and (b) disseminating education for reconstruction of economic, cultural and social life of the rural folk.

SIKSHĀ-SATRA is a multipurpose higher secondary school meant primarily for rural children. The school follows a Basic Education curriculum up to class VIII, thereafter it offers to the students a choice of streams of specialisation in (a) Humanities, with emphasis on rural sociology, social work in rural areas and public administration in rural areas, (b) Science, with a bias for soil science, agricultural science, irrigation and sanitation engineering and animal husbandry, (c) Home science with bias for animal husbandry, nutrition technology, midwifery and public hygiene services and (d) Crafts.

SILPA-SADANA or the Cottage Industry Training Centre provides for training in (i) One-year Certificate course in any of the crafts of basketry, paper-making, book-binding and lacquer-work; (ii) One-year Certificate course in any three of the following crafts: Basketry, paper-making, book-binding, artistic leather-work, glazed pottery and lacquer-work; (iii) One-year Women's Handicraft Certificate course in embroidery, knitting, tailoring, toy-making, weaving and basketry; (iv) two-year Certificate course in weaving or in woodcraft and (v) three-year Diploma course in either weaving or in wood-craft. For admission to Certificate courses a general education up to Junior Secondary level, i.e., up to class VIII is necessary, and for admission to Diploma courses, a certificate of passing the Matriculation or similar school leaving examination is necessary.

Apart from imparting training to the students in various Certificate and Diploma courses as detailed above, a full-fledged Training Institute in Crafts and Industries attached to Silpa-Sadana looks after the task of development and resurrection of indigenous crafts and industries in a number of villages by training up village craftsmen. This Institute also tries to re-organize the management structure of village industries by bringing artisans, especially the trained ones, into co-operative fold. The implementation of co-operative programme and propaganda rests

9. (top) Śāntiniketan building.

10. (below) Surul Kuṭhi at Śrīniketan.

11. (top) Chhātimtalā at Śāntiniketan.

12. (below) Mural painting on the birth of Śri Chaitanya by Nandalal Bose on the old library building at Śāntiniketan.

with the Village Extension Section of Visva-Bharati Palli-Samgathana-Vivaga.

VILLAGE EXTENSION SECTION of Palli-Samgathana-Vibhaga maintains a liaison between Bolpur-Sriniketan National Extension Service Block and the villages to facilitate extension work in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry, health and sanitation, cooperation and education. This section organizes, supervises and co-ordinates the work of seed, pesticide and fertilizer application and distribution. For this purpose, it maintains an agricultural farm in Sriniketan. The Sriniketan dairy and poultry supplies improved varieties of poultry to the villagers and extends the facilities of better breeding of cattle. The section organizes, supervises and co-ordinates the work of Health Co-operative Societies in villages of this block; maintains an out-door dispensary and a maternity and child welfare centre in Sriniketan and 3 Leprosy Control Units with aid from the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation and sends out teams of specialists and medical advisers to rural health centres and health co-operative societies when needed. Besides the services already mentioned, the Village Extension Section organizes and supervises anti-malarial work and attends to rural sanitation problems and runs a mobile milk canteen with UNICEF help. The Section organizes and supervises co-operative societies of rural artisans, helps to rehabilitate displaced artisans in villages by providing them with tools, raw materials and designs etc., establishes work centres in villages for training in production of artistic handicrafts and arranges for the marketing of products. In the field of education, the work of the Village Extension Section comprises the running of the library service programme and organizing the training camp for co-operative workers. The Section renders library service through 6 feeder and 12 village libraries. It may be worthwhile to point out that the Palli-Samgathana-Vibhaga had been rendering these services since 1921-22, much before the launching of the National Extension Service programme by the Government of West Bengal.

Among other educational institutions in Sriniketan mention should be made of :

INSTITUTE OF RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION, which was established in 1956 under a scheme sponsored by the Council of Rural Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India. This institute prepares students for a graduation degree, specializing in either agricultural, irrigational, horticultural, soil

and biological sciences or in rural social work, rural sociology, rural economics and rural public administration. Those seeking admission to the graduation course of this Institure must have passed the Higher Secondary or equivalent examination. Those seeking admission to graduation course after Matriculation or equivalent examination are required to go through a preparatory course lasting for a year. The residential male and female students of the Institute are lodged in separate hostels.

SIKSHA-CHARCHĀ, sponsored by the Department of Education, Government of West Bengal imparts in-service and residential training for short durations to the teachers of Primary and Junior Basic schools managed by District School Boards.

SOCIAL EDUCATION ORGANIZERS' TRAINING CENTRE is sponsored by the Ministry of Community Development, Government of India. The centre offers: (i) six-month in-service job training course for male Social Education Organizers deputed by various State Governments; (ii) ten-and-a-half-month in-service job training course for female Social Education Organizers deputed by different state governments and State Social Welfare Advisory Boards; (iii) one-and-a-half-month refreshers' training course for Social Education Organizers (male); (iv) two-month refreshers' training course for female Social Education Organizers; and (v) One-month Orientation course for teacher-educators of Primary and Junior Basic teachers' training institutes. The centre has an art & craft wing, an Information Centre and publishes a quarterly journal and bulletins concerning information on social education.

VISVA-BHARATI LOKA-SIKSHĀ SAṀSAD, sponsored by the Palli-Samgathana-Vibhaga, is almost as old as the Palli-Samgathana-Vibhaga itself. It is a body which conducts Adya, Madhya and Anta examinations for the self-taught people in villages all-round West Bengal through the Bengali medium. It was set up in order to enthuse people to educate themselves. Visva-Bharati is an expanding University. Every year its field of activities is expanding.

APPENDIX

PROGRESS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1945-61*

Category of schools	1945-46		1950-51		1955-56		1960-61	
	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils
Higher Secondary	—		—		15	6,916 (1956-57)	25	11,712
High	28	8,207	34	10,637	47	15,007	43	10,722
Middle English	51	7,063	69	10,248	hereafter bracketed with the item following			
Junior High	—		—		102	8,660	107	9,577 (including Senior Basic)

* Source: Directorate of Education, Govt. of West Bengal.

CHAPTER XIV

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES IN EARLY TIMES

A survey of public health and medical facilities in early times in this district reveals the heritage of Ayurvedic treatment from time immemorial. The earliest reference to the Ayurvedic system of treatment rests with the name of Chakrapani Datta,[1] a renowned Ayurvedic physician of his days, who is said to have been born in the latter half of the 11th century A.D. in village Mayureswar in the police station of the same name. He wrote commentaries on the works of Charaka and Susruta, the two classical works on Ayurvedic system of ancient India. Chakrapani Datta also wrote a number of books on different branches of Ayurvedic treatment.

Side by side with the Aryan Ayurvedic system,[2] the non-Aryan system of treatment, based largely on magical and religious rites, prevailed among the Santals of the district. Bodding, working in the adjoining Santal Parganas district, supplied a list of 305 prescriptions of herbs and indigenous medicines as prepared by Santal medicine-men.[3] He also supplied a similar list of veterinary medicines of 15 varieties. The human diseases treated by the Santal medicine-men, as tabulated by him, are of several types, right from complaints affecting head, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, mouth and throat down to cholera, tuberculosis, leprosy, measles, small-pox, venereal diseases, cancer, pneumonia, rabies, snake-bite etc. In a case of illness the Santal *ojha guru*

[1] Son of Narayan Datta, a contemporary and *Chef de cusine* to Nayapala Deva (Circa A.D. 1040-70), the king of Gaud, Chakrapani Datta wrote three books named, *Chikitsa Samgraha, Drabyaguna, Sarbasara Samgraha*, the first one famed as *Chakradatta* after the name of its author. This book is a revised and enlarged edition of Brinda's *Siddhayoga*. It incorporates large portions of some famous books which are presently lost, namely, *Nabanitak-Samhita, Charakanyasa, Brddhabideha, Brddha-susruta, Briddhabagbata*, etc. He wrote a treatise on *Charak Samhita* named *Charaktattvapradipika* and treatise on Susruta named *Bhanumati* and thereby obtained the titles *Charakchaturanana* and *Susrutasahasra-nayana* (See Gurupada Haldar — *Baidyakabrittānta*. Calcutta, 1954. Also see Kaviraj Bijoykali Bhattacharya — *Āyurveder Itihās*. Calcutta, 1361 B.S. and Basanta Kumar Sengupta — *Chakrapani Datta*. Calcutta, 1326 B.S.).

[2] up to the end of 1968, 65 Ayurvedic physicians of the district registered themselves with Paschim Banga Ayurved Parishad, Calcutta.

[3] P.O. Bodding — Santal Medicine in Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. X, No. 2. Calcutta, 1925. pp. 159-394.

gives medicines, recites incantations and performs sacrifices. The medicines, prepared from roots, herbs and plants, are also administered by the Santal *'raranic'*, who, however, knows nothing about sacrifices and incantations.

It appears that according to the Santals there are three main causes of disease,[1] namely, supernatural, human and natural. Diseases created by the *bongas* (evil spirits) may be called supernatural, and those caused by magic or witchcraft may be termed human. The natural causes leading to diseases are the attacks of worms of varied sizes (*tejo*), disorders of muscles and nerves (*sir*), bad diets etc. But then, "if the *ojha guru* fails to solve a problem raised by misfortune or disease, a number of explanations are offered by the people as well as the *gurus*. One is that the power of the responsible *bonga* is much greater than that of the *ojha*. In the case of death of a person by a disease, an additional explanation is heard that the appropriate medicine, provided by *Thakur* (god) for such a disease, has not been found. A third explanation offered by an *ojha guru* for his failure to save a person from death rests on the belief that the span of life allotted by *Thakur* has come to an end. The last point may be illustrated by a statement made by Kali Hemrom, the *ojha guru* of Kuotala (near Bolpur — Ed.). He said one day that he could cure any case of snake bite, except a person bitten, not by just a snake, but by *kal*, i.e. death itself. On being asked how he would know whether it was a snake or *kal* that had bitten, he replied, if a person is bitten in the hand between the index and the middle finger, then it is *kal* that has bitten; the life span of the person is finished. And nothing can be done about it."[2]

But the hold of the traditional *ojhas* is fast dwindling in the district and Santals in increasing numbers are taking resort to medical facilities provided by the Government in the out-door dispensaries and Health Centres. This shows that their previous belief in supernatural or magical causes of diseases is fast withering away.

The folk traditions of medical relief through worship of village deities or through the performance of some simple rites are always there in different parts of the district, apart from several spots famed for bringing about radical cure of diseases.

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[1] P.O. Bodding — The Santals and disease in Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. X, No. 1. Calcutta, 1925. pp. 1-8.

[2] N. Datta Majumder — The Santal; a study in culture-change. Calcutta, 1956. p. 107-8.

It has been said, "A Bagdi or Dom priest, called Dharma Pundit, sometimes professes to be inspired by the goddess, and foretells future events and prescribes medicines to those who consult him. Divination is frequently practised by the low caste priests, especially after the worship of Mangala and other disease godlings, when epidemics break out. Incense is burnt, and the priest sits holding his head over the fumes. After a time, he throws himself into a frenzy, and, as the fit passes off, the worshippers ask him the cause of the calamity. He then replies, assigning it to some wrongful act or omission on their part which has brought down the wrath of the deity, and stating what sacrifice is necessary in order to appease him. The necessary offerings are at once made."[1]

The medicinal properties of the hot springs of Bakreswar in Dubrajpur police station has been acclaimed locally as efficacious in curing phthisis, diabetes, arthritis, rheumatism, bronchitis and several skin diseases, and generally the last two. Similar properties, efficacious for curing arthritis and rheumatism, are said to be existing in a pond in village Belia, about a mile and a half away from Ahmadpur in Sainthia police station, on the Sahibganj loop line of the Eastern Railway. It is said that a dip in the said pond and besmearing of the affected part with the mud supplied by local priests, followed by a worship of the local deity, cures patients suffering from arthritis and rheumatism.

Birbhum has always been considered to be one of the healthiest districts of West Bengal because of its favourable geographical conditions. The land here is undulating and porous, and there is ample scope for quick drainage through rivers and streams. In early times there was the problem regarding supply of potable water. People generally depended on tanks for the supply of drinking water. "These tanks are lined with an almost impervious coating of black clay and silt; and the water in them becomes low in the hot weather, and, as they are rarely cleaned, very dirty."[2] To check small-pox at that time vaccination was, however, compulsory only in the municipality of Suri, and according to O'Malley, "there is a certain prejudice against it

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[1] A. Mitra — Census, 1951, West Bengal : District Handbook : Birbhum. Calcutta, 1954. p. xxi.

[2] L.S.S.O'Malley — Bengal District Gazetteers : Birbhum, Calcutta, 1910, p. 43.

on the part of some people in the district, but this prejudice is growing fainter with the lapse of time."[1]

As to the medical facilities in 1910, O'Malley wrote: "there are three charitable dispensaries in the district giving in-door relief, viz. — (1) the dispensary at Suri, with seven beds for male patients and seven for female patients; (2) that at Rāmpur Hāt, with four beds for men and two beds for women; and (3) the Lady Curzon Zanana Hospital at Suri with five beds for women. There are also three public out-door dispensaries at Bolpur, Chellā and Nalhāti, and three private out-door dispensaries at Hetampur, Kirnahar and Lābpur, the first maintained by the Rājā Bahādur of Hetampur, the second by the Zamīndār of Kirnahar, and the third by the Zamīndār of Lābpur."[2]*

Homoeopathic system

The homoeopathic system of treatment started operating successfully around 1905 in the district[3] through the efforts of Dr. Surendranath Bose, who had a flourishing practice at Rampurhat for about 50 years. Dr. Nilratan Bandyopadhyaya, the author of a popular homoeopathic materia medica *Lakshan Saṁgraha* started practising at Rampurhat in 1925, acquired renown, but died early. The weekly *Mayurakshi* of Suri publishes articles on homoepathic system of medicine, though there is no exclusive Homoeopathic Journal in the district. There are two registered homoeopathic medical associations in the district, namely the Birbhum District Homoeopathic Association[4] with its headquarters at Suri and the Dubrajpur Homoeo Society with its headquarters at Rampurhat, and a branch of the Homoeo Federation of Calcutta at Rampurhat. There is a charitable dispensary at Dubrajpur run by the Birbhum District Homoeopathic Association, where quite a number of patients are attended to daily.

VITAL STATISTICS

During the last quarter of the 19th century an epidemic fever, commonly known as Burdwan Fever, took heavy toll of lives

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[1] op. cit. p 47.

[2] op. cit. p. 48-9.

* *According to the 1961 Census there were 205 Allopaths, of whom 4 were* females and 75 males in urban areas of the district.

[3] Source: A resume prepared by Dr. N. K. Sarkar of Homoeo Medical Club, Howrah, which was based on information supplied by Dr. H. S. Mukherjee of Rampurhat.

[4] A convention of West Bengal Homoeopathic practitioners was held at Rampurhat on 28-29 December 1968 by the Birbhum District Homoeopathic Association in collaboration with Homoeo Medical Club, West Bengal, Howrah, to which it is affiliated.

and for some years the mortality rose up to 3,50,000. Between 1872 and 1881 the disease took a virulent form and in the Sadar subdivision it continued to be so during the next decade. The epidemic disappeared after 1891 and the great loss of population showed signs of recovery around 1910 when O'Malley was writing his Gazetteer of the district. Prior to this, however, in 1906-08, a cholera in an epidemic form took a great toll. Malaria and influenza broke out when the Sadar subdivision suffered from floods between 1911-13. The tribal people, especially of the Sadar subdivision suffered from the epidemic, and as a result many of them migrated to the Rampurhat subdivision of the district between 1921-31. Thereafter, healthy climate continued for some time till in 1943 the great famine occurred which, followed by epidemic diseases, took a great toll of lives. Improvements in public health services have considerably reduced death rate since 1943.

While the total demographic mobility in an area is controlled both by internal and external factors, the birth and death rates can be more precisely attributed to internal factors alone. The following table giving absolute figures of birth and death as also their rates per thousand is based on 20-year period from 1941-60.

BIRTH & DEATH RATES IN BIRBHUM : 1941-60

	1941-50				1951-60			
	Births	Rates per thousand	Deaths	Rates per thousand	Births	Rates per thousand	Deaths	Rates per thousand
Male	1,42,164	13.6	1,44,278	27.5	1,84,875	17.33	71,161	13.17
Female	1,35,525	12.9	1,43,118	27.3	1,74,433	16.35	65,900	12.52

It appears from the above table that while birth rates during the second decade showed signs of a slight increase, the death rate has fallen considerably which may have been due to better health facilities in recent years.

The table below shows birth and death rates obtaining in the urban and the rural areas of the district in recent years.

BIRTH & DEATH FIGURES FOR BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1961-65*

	Births			Deaths		
	Urban	Rural	Rates per thousand (on total)	Urban	Rural	Rates per thousand (on total)
1961	1,402	35,381	25.2	142	13,034	9.4
1962	1,394	36,786	25.5	133	12,735	8.6
1963	1,614	37,442	25.5	103	14,136	9.3
1964	1,654	32,224	21.6	153	15,177	9.5
1965	1,288	28,444	18.5	193	14,557	9.2

The foregoing table reveals that the birth rate has far exceeded the death rate during the recent years in both the urban and the rural areas of the district.

The following figures would reveal the number of deaths in different age-groups in recent years.

DEATHS IN DIFFERENT AGE-GROUPS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1961-65

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Under 28 days	1,433	1,407	1,361	1,323	916
28 days to 11 months	1,401	1,316	1,416	1,434	1,210
Under 1 year	2,834	2,723	2,777	2,761	2,121
1-14 years	2,748	2,521	3,057	3,332	3,645
15-44 years	2,132	2,040	2,290	2,464	2,481
45-64 years	2,810	2,789	3,007	3,313	3,117
65 +	2,616	2,753	3,068	3,398	3,340

That the infant deaths, further discussed later, are of considerable importance in relation to deaths in higher age-groups, will be clear from the foregoing table.

Infant mortality

In Birbhum district, as elsewhere, children form the largest single component of the total population as will appear from the following table classifying the 1961 population of the district (14,46,158) under different age groups.

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* Source: Directorate of Health Services, Government of West Bengal — Annual Reports on the state of Health of West Bengal (Part I), 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 (unpublished).

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS : 1961

Age Group (Years)	Number	
	Rural	Urban
0-9	4,57,703	28,839
10-14	1,21,469	10,286
15-19	1,02,294	9,450
20-24	1,07,149	9,819
25-29	1,12,221	8,936
30-34	93,615	7,787
35-39	76,718	5,882
40-44	64,600	5,408
45-49	56,042	4,028
50-54	50,822	3,753
55-59	35,231	2,363
60-64	31,686	2,967
65-69	15,476	1,049
70 +	19,812	1,200

Though children (0-9 age group) form a sizeable population of the district, mortality hazards of children are greater than those in higher age groups. The following table[1] brings out the relative proportions between total deaths and infant mortality in the district during 1951-60 decade.

INFANT MORTALITY IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1951-60

Year	Total Deaths	Infant Deaths	Infant death rate per 1,000
1951	18,766	3,723	117.1
1952	13,353	3,747	105.1
1953	12,194	3,343	92.8
1954	12,708	3,437	97.4
1955	12,028	3,081	81.4
1956	12,421	3,027	80.8
1957	13,996	2,919	87.3
1958	14,960	3,207	96.2
1959	13,470	3,267	74.7
1960	13,165	2,900	82.7

[1] J. Datta Gupta & P. G. Choudhury — Census of India 1961 : West Bengal and Sikkim : Vol. XVI, Pt. I-B, Report on Vital Statistics. Delhi, 1967. pp. 66-9.

Infant mortality, however, showed signs of decrease in recent years. Infant deaths numbered 2,834, 2,723, 2,777, 2,761 and 2,121 in 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 respectively accounting for death rates per thousand to the extent of 77.0, 71.3, 71.1, 81.5 and 71.3 for the same years.

The following table[1] would reveal the number of children below one year dying in the three towns of the district, namely Suri, Bolpur and Rampurhat, during the 1951-60 decade.

INFANT DEATHS IN THE TOWNS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1951-60

Year	Suri	Bolpur	Rampurhat
1951	17	15	2
1952	23	15	31
1953	20	3	3
1954	12	4	1
1955	33	11	5
1956	39	22	1
1957	42	14	6
1958	40	19	8
1959	9	16	3
1960	3	—	14

Though the figures have gone up in 1960 for Rampurhat, on the whole signs of progressive improvement are perceptible in respect of all the three towns.

Compilation of Vital Statistics

Registration of Vital events in this State is governed by the Bengal Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1873, but the provisions of the Act not being strictly enforced have led to under-registration in the State as also in the Birbhum district. At present there are seven agencies working as Registration Units of vital events, namely, Registrars of births and deaths of the municipalities, Sanitary Inspectors, Medical Officers of the rural health centres, Officers-in-charge of Police Stations, Railway Station Masters, staff of Model Health and Ideal Registration units (where appointed) and others. It has been seen that in 1964 all the 3 municipalities and all the 173 union registration units and health centres of the district submitted their monthly reports on vital events to the State headquarters against a total requirement from 200 Registration Units which included Railway Station masters, officer-in-charge of police stations etc., thus

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[1] ibid. 92-123.

accounting for 88 per cent of receipts against total requirement. The Chowkidars, who supply information through their *hatchittas* to the Registration Units had 92.1 per cent of actual attendance to scheduled attendance in 1964 in the district.[1] As the value of any reporting system depends on how quickly it is received, an analysis was made in 1964 in respect of the receipt of all reports showing the average time-lag. The following table[2] would reveal the time-lag accruing in the process of reporting vital events by the Registration units to the State headquarters.

TIME-LAG ON RECEIPT OF VITAL STATISTICS RETURNS FROM BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1964

Registration Unit (Excluding Railways)		Registration Unit (months)		Lag period					Average lag period
					Above	Above	Above		
Total No. due	No. received	Total No. due	No. received	0-1 month	1-3 months	3-6 months	6 months	Total	in months
176	176	2,112	2,073	1,283	747	26	17	2,073	1.1

In recent years the annual administrative reports of local Registrars of births and deaths as also the annual report on the working of the District Inspectors of Health Statistics, posted in 1963, are being collected in the State Bureau of Health Intelligence for improving the working of vital registration.

As the registration of vital events has been deficient both in coverage and quality so far, the central compilation scheme at the State Bureau of Health Intelligence was initiated. The success of the scheme depends mainly on receipt of the duplicate copies of registers of births and deaths and a challan directly from the local Registrars of births and deaths every months. The following table would give an idea of the working of the local Registrars of births and deaths in the district in 1964.

PARTICULARS OF VITAL REGISTRATION : BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1964

Estimated mid-year population	Official registration Total Registered		Vital events verified		Omission detected	
	Birth	Death	Birth	Death	Birth	Death
15,72,581	33,878	15,330	9,990	3,362	787	122

[1] Source: Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services Annual Report on the state of Health of West Bengal, 1964. Pt. I.

[2] loc. cit.

Half-yearly census

Half-yearly census of births and deaths has also been undertaken since 1962 to improve registration of vital events. It envisages a complete enumeration, every six months, in January and July, by the local Registrars of births and deaths, in a village within their Registration units for the purpose of a check on the records.

Reporting by *Gram Adhyakshas*

Initiated in 1965, and as yet not quite encouraging, a pilot study on the reporting of vital events by the *Gram Adhyakshas* in their respective villages for one Anchal has been undertaken in collaboration with the State Directorate of Panchayats.

The purpose of the scheme is to see whether *Gram Adhyakshas* can work more efficiently than the Chowkidars. The *Gram Adhyakshas* are supplied with *hatchittas* for recording vital events occurring in their respective jurisdictions. The *hatchittas* are collected at monthly intervals by the staff of the Health Centres and verified with the information supplied by the Chowkidars. A cross-reference between the two agencies is likely to improve the registration of vital events numerically.

DISEASES COMMON TO THE DISTRICT

The following table[1] gives the number of out-door and indoor patients treated in various hospitals of the district recognized by the Government and their respective mortality rates. Though the number of patients surveyed here is smaller than that in the whole district, the present figures based on a considerably larger population may be accepted as representative.

PATIENTS TREATED IN RECOGNIZED HOSPITALS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT AND DEATHS FROM SPECIFIC CAUSES : 1962-65

Name of disease		1962	1963	1964	1965
	Out-door	8,208	8,358	8,787	9,747
Anaemias	Indoor	161	209	339	98
	Deaths	12	13	25	20
	Out-door	44	36	3	31
Cholera	Indoor	1	2	4	33
	Deaths	1	1	—	14

[1] Source : Directorate of Health Services, Government of West Bengal — Annual Reports on the state of Health of West Bengal (Part — II), 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 (unpublished).

Name of disease		1962	1963	1964	1965
Diabetes	Out-door	13	7	53	43
	Indoor	7	4	30	7
	Deaths	—	—	3	—
Diseases during child birth	Out-door	2,017	2,664	2,649	2,380
	Indoor	674	754	935	227
	Deaths	6	5	4	9
Dysentery	Out-door	33,251	39,969	47,686	21,009
	Indoor	407	425	514	125
	Deaths	21	17	40	26
Early infancy diseases	Out-door	243	204	368	638
	Indoor	84	61	73	16
	Deaths	60	50	60	15
Filariasis	Out-door	1,604	1,677	2,032	2,639
	Indoor	20	15	44	7
	Deaths	—	—	—	1
Gastritis	Out-door	8,538	5,686	6,477	7,987
	Indoor	118	74	98	18
	Deaths	—	2	1	1
Influenza	Out-door	48,606	45,093	39,093	37,247
	Indoor	66	44	99	9
	Deaths	—	—	—	—
Leprosy	Out-door	2,383	1,826	1,115	1,259
	Indoor	3	—	—	1
	Deaths	1	—	—	—
Malaria	Out-door	648	180	791	2
	Indoor	29	14	11	—
	Deaths	2	—	—	—

Name of disease		1962	1963	1964	1965
Measles	Out-door	1,036	1,288	655	1,011
	Indoor	10	3	9	5
	Deaths	1	—	1	1
Mental Diseases	Out-door	271	318	174	197
	Indoor	49	30	47	13
	Deaths	—	—	—	—
Metabolic Nutritional diseases	Out-door	11,380	13,439	17,063	17,786
	Indoor	109	94	173	46
	Deaths	30	5	29	20
Pluerisy	Out-door	1,529	1,726	1,043	1,540
	Indoor	23	12	30	8
	Deaths	—	—	—	2
Pneumonia different kinds	Out-door	4,576	4,410	4,795	3,830
	Indoor	156	128	196	48
	Deaths	18	9	28	19
Rheumatism	Out-door	4,051	4,889	3,150	2,765
	Indoor	43	50	178	6
	Deaths	—	—	—	—
Senility etc.	Out-door	15	204	158	129
	Indoor	1	—	4	1
	Deaths	—	—	—	—
Small-pox	Out-door	32	5	34	275
	Indoor	2	15	14	35
	Deaths	—	3	7	27
Spondylitis & Arthritis	Out-door	10,910	8,235	8,437	4,310
	Indoor	52	48	60	11
	Deaths	—	—	—	1
Tetanus	Out-door	75	77	96	125
	Indoor	105	117	259	146
	Deaths	28	42	94	84
T.B. of bones and joints	Out-door	18	9	14	16
	Indoor	16	7	25	15
	Deaths	—	—	—	5

Name of disease		1962	1963	1964	1965
T.B. of intestines etc.	Out-door	23	21	13	7
	Indoor	29	15	22	6
	Deaths	7	—	7	3
T.B. of meninzes	Out-door	4	—	7	3
	Indoor	7	5	19	13
	Deaths	4	1	3	5
T.B. — pulmonary	Out-door	1,576	1,690	941	1,114
	Indoor	128	44	251	99
	Deaths	14	9	39	40
T.B. — respiratory	Out-door	103	99	190	154
	Indoor	20	7	15	6
	Deaths	4	1	6	3
T.B. of other forms	Out-door	149	11	26	81
	Indoor	4	4	9	2
	Deaths	—	—	—	1
Typhoid	Out-door	1,414	1,985	746	1,602
	Indoor	198	326	350	59
	Deaths	8	7	6	—

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis, especially of the Pulmonary type, has been taking place in the rural areas in an alarming form in recent years, and this district has been quite endemic to it. The only redeeming feature in this connexion is that the challenge of the disease is being met through anti-T.B. measures in a large scale in both the private and the public sectors of the district. The following quinquennial figures would reveal the deaths from the disease in the years preceding 1960.

QUINQUENNIAL TABLE OF DEATHS FROM PULMONARY T.B. IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT : 1945-60

	Actual deaths		Death rate per thousand	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1945	159	38	0.3	0.1
1950	116	33	0.2	0.1
1955	130	29	0.2	0.05
1960	66	24	0.09	0.03

The following table would reveal the urban and rural distribution of tuberculosis of different types in the district in recent years.

DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-65

		1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Pulmonary T.B. without mention of occupational diseases of lung	Urban	1	—	—	7	4
	Rural	86	60	66	54	37
T. B. of respiratory system other than pulmonary without mention of occupational diseases of lung	Urban	5	—	4	1	2
	Rural	93	126	150	121	112

It appears from the above figures that T.B. occurs more in the rural areas than in the urban, the reasons being malnutrition and unsound economic condition of the rural folk.

There is a Medical Officer, co-ordinating the anti-T.B. activities, under the C.M.O.H. in the district. The following list would indicate the number of chest clinics, with the number of patients treated there, operating in the district.

NO. OF PULMONARY T.B PATIENTS TREATED IN PUBLIC HOSPITAL (INDOOR), BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1963-67[1]

	Year	Patients treated	Patients discharged	Patients died
District Hospital, Suri (20 beds)	1963	4	—	1
	1964	12	14	—
	1965	13	12	2
	1966	20	21	1
	1967	24	14	4
Jail Hospital Suri (30 beds-Departmental hospital)	1963	23	—	1
	1964	51	—	—
	1965	49	—	—
	1966	48	—	2
	1967	67	—	—

[1] Source: Chief Medical Officer of Health, Birbhum.

The outdoor chest clinic of the District Hospital, Suri also attended to a large number of T.B. patients detailed in the figures given below.

NO. OF T.B. PATIENTS TREATED IN THE OUTDOOR CHEST CLINIC ATTACHED TO THE DISTRICT HOSPITAL, SURI: 1961-67[1]

	Total new cases	Total T. B. cases	Pulmonary T. B. cases	Non-Pulmonary T. B. cases	Total old & new attendance
1961	1,259	207	202	5	16,732
1962	1,483	226	212	14	15,527
1963	1,417	581	561	20	20,068
1964	3,649	594	563	31	21,201
1965	3,516	640	601	39	18,165
1966	2,900	928	977	51	13,330
1967	2,310	974	918	54	16,523

The B.C.G.* vaccination team of workers work directly under the Assistant C.M.O.H. of the district headquarters who is helped by a Medical Officer in this behalf and the following table would reveal the number of tuberculin tests and B.C.G. vaccination done in the district between 1961 and 1968.

B.C.G. VACCINATION IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-68[2]

	Tuberculin tests done	B.C.G. Vaccination done
1961	85,179	22,360
1962	97,788	38,264
1963	83,908	35,800
1964	84,915	35,622
1965	42,118	17,159
1966	43,664	19,483
1967	57,727	28,226
1968	45,549	24,881

[1] & [2] Source: Chief Medical Officer of Health, Birbhum.
* Bacillus Calmette-Guerin.

Apart from the anti-T.B. activities in the public sector private organization like 'Niramoy' of Calcutta have done yeoman's service towards eradication of tuberculoses in the district by opening a Sanatorium along with an outdoor chest clinic and a domiciliary unit which has been dealt with separately elsewhere in this chapter.

Fever

The famous Burdwan fever which was of a virulent type during the last quarter of the nineteenth century had, according to O'Malley's, gazetteer "all the characteristics of the ordinary seasonal malarious fever of the country." O'Malley quoted the then Civil Surgeon of Birbhum, according to whom: "...the Burdwan fever was a noncontagious malarious fever, gradually increasing in severity in any given place as the malaria-producing condition of the soil became more and more developed, and gradually decreasing as that condition of the soil also passed away more or less completely." O'Malley observed: "Like a flowing tide, it (the Burdwan Fever — Ed.) touched a place one year and receded, reached it again next year with greater force and again receded, repeating this process till it had passed over almost the whole district." The epidemic during its spell of existence took a toll of about 3,50,000 lives. Appearing in April 1871 it spread far and wide in the district, except the higher and sparsely-populated country to the west of Suri, till it disappeared before the turn of the century. O'Malley observed: "During the first year of its invasion the fever was mild, and there was a simultaneous increase of the general endemic fever and a subsidence of both usual at the end of the fever season. In the second year the fever began earlier than the ordinary country fever and earlier than the epidemic fever of the previous year; it also lasted longer and caused greater mortality. During the third year the disease was marked by still larger mortality, both from primary attacks and secondary complications, the systems of those who had survived the two previous years being now so saturated with malaria, that they had little power to resist the attacks of the fever and fell rapid victim to it. During the fourth, fifth and sixth years, six years being the average duration of the fever in any place, there was a general and slow recovery, for the fever in each successive year attacked fewer persons, was of a less fatal type, and prevailed for a shorter period. It finally disappeared altogether in the seventh year, but left many

of its victims with permanently enlarged spleens and other complications to indicate the trial which the system had undergone.

"When the epidemic was at its height, the fever appeared to be most intense in large and old villages where manure and filth had accumulated for years; but it was not confined to the places where sanitation was most deficient, or restricted to villages built in low at alluvial tracts. On the other hand, it was not severe in many large villages devoid of any attempt at sanitation, which were quite as unhealthy as any of the villages where hundreds had fallen victims. No caste or class of persons was long able to resist the malady. At first the rich and well-to-do, and the Doms, Haris and Bagdis, enjoyed a certain immunity, but soon the fever affected all alike. Still, in the midst of the pestilence, when hundreds were laid low, some individuals often enjoyed perfect immunity. Weak, feeble persons escaped, while strong, vigorous men fell victims in the same house. Lastly, while in some families none died, in others nearly all perished.

"The sympotoms did not differ from those of other malarious fevers, with the exception that there was more pronounced prostration and a greater tendency to congestion of the internal organs. In some cases the fever returned daily, in others every second or third day, but more frequently its attacks were irregular. An attack generally lasted from seven to ten days; and after a period varying from ten days to three weeks, the fever recurred and went through the same course, leaving the patient weaker than before. Then followed another interval and another attack of fever, with increasing debility and loss of appetite. At this period, probably for the first time, palpable enlargement of the spleen or derangement of the liver was observed. These attacks continued to recur notwithstanding remedial measures; and gradually, sometimes rapidly, the patient became more and more prostrated, anaemic, or dropsical, until at last he succumbed to these complications or was carried off by diarrhoea. Occasionally the lungs became affected, and more rarely cerebral congestion supervened.

"Just as the decade 1871-80 opened with an outbreak of fever in 1871, so the decade 1881-90 began with fever in 1881 and

1882; and it is a singular fact that the next decade also began (in 1891) with a very wide and general outbreak of a distressing but not very fatal type. As regards the epidemic of 1881-82, the Sanitary Commissioner wrote in 1881:— 'Birbhum was this year the most unhealthy district in the Burdwan Division. The sickness was unprecedentedly great, and the mortality the heaviest ever known, exceeding that of the preceding year by 10.06 per 1,000. In fact, the disease raged as an epidemic throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the Civil Surgeon said that, from his experience of previous years, Burdwān did not fare worse in the height of its unhealthy seasons. Thanas Suri, Bolpur, Dubrājpur, Rāmpur Hāt and Nalhāti suffered the most, the mortality varying from 48.5 to 31.4 per 1,000. In the following year the epidemic was less severe, but the death-rate rose to 37.6 in Nalhati thana. After that year there was a steady improvement, the decrease in the number of deaths being steady and progressive.'

"Since 1891 there have been no serious epidemics of fever, except in 1906 and 1907, when the district suffered from a wave of fever which steadily increased in intensity, the death-rate from fever alone rising to 38.27 per mille in 1907, and being the highest returned by any district in Bengal. In that year fever prevailed with epidemic intensity, village after village being attacked until the whole district was affected. A special enquiry was made, and it was ascertained that the increase of mortality was due to a very large extent to malarial fever of the malignant tertian type, though undoubtedly a large number of deaths were attributed to fever which were due to other causes. The fever abated in 1908, which before the breaking of the rains was an exceptionally dry year. Nearly all the tanks in the district dried up and had their bottoms excavated by the cultivators for the sake of the mud which is used as a soil-dressing. In this way the malarial infectivity of the tanks was destroyed, and infected anopheles mosquitos having nowhere to breed, died off."[1] In recent years though several diseases have been grouped under 'Fever', the district has often recorded higher mortality rates from fever in relation to other districts. The following table[2] would reveal the number of male and female deaths from fever in the district between 1951 and 1958.

[1] op. cit. pp. 44-46.
[2] J. Datta Gupta & P. G. Choudhury — op. cit. p. 36.

DEATHS FROM FEVER IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1951-58

	Male	Rate per thousand of population	Female	Rate per thousand of population
1951	6,868	12.5	6,618	12.4
1952	4,526	8.0	4,261	7.7
1953	4,137	7.0	3,990	7.0
1954	4,548	7.5	4,556	7.7
1955	4,328	6.9	4,186	6.8
1956	4,574	7.1	4,312	6.8
1957	5,294	8.0	5,227	8.1
1958	5,245	8.8	5,337	8.0

Malaria

Though Burdwan fever was likened to Malaria in the nineteenth century. O'Malley treated Malaria also as a distinctive disease in the old Gazetteer (1910) and wrote: "It is reported that the majority of the deaths returned as caused by fever are due to malarial fevers, of which the most common is the intermittent type and especially the quotidian variety. Next in order of frequency come tertian and then remittent fevers. The quartan fever is less frequent, while the double quotidian and double tertian fevers, though not unknown, are rarer still. Chronic malarial fevers with hypertrophied spleen and cachexia, as an effect of the above, are seen in many parts."[1]

In recent years through determination of the spleen rate the degree of malaria prevalence in the district was measured, that is, the percentage of children between 2 and 10 years, showing enlarged spleen, was taken. The spleen census undertaken in the villages of the district, before the control measures of 1951-52 were taken up, indicated endemic condition in all the police stations of the district.

The following table would indicate the spleen rate in different police stations of the district prior to the institution of control measures in 1951-52.

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[1] loc. cit.

SPLEEN RATE IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: BEFORE & AFTER CONTROL MEASURES OF 1951-52

Police Stations	Spleen rate per cent prior to 1951-52	Spleen rate per cent in 1959-60
Bolpur	27.4	0.0
Dubrajpur	31.1	0.3
Ilambazar	34.9	0.0
Khayrasol	32.8	0.0
Labhpur	31.9	0.0
Mayureswar	9.9	0.0
Mahammad Bazar	13.4	0.1
Murarai	12.3	0.0
Nalhati	11.7	0.0
Nanur	36.4	0.0
Rajnagar	28.7	0.0
Rampurhat	12.2	0.0
Sainthia	27.5	0.0
Suri	13.1	0.1

The incidence of malaria prior to 1951-52, when anti-malaria operations were undertaken, was of a very high order. At that time malaria used to contribute more than 37% of all cases treated in the hospitals, health centres and dispensaries of the district in a year.

The following table would reveal the number of malaria cases in the district prior to the introduction of anti-malaria measures along with the corresponding number of deaths.

MALARIA CASES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1948-51

Year	Total No. of cases	Percentage of cases	Total No. of deaths	Death rate per 1,000
1948	1,28,090	68.1	8,358	8.1
1949	1,32,110	69.6	10,828	10.4
1950	55,505	61.9	8,852	8.5
1951	58,801	37.7	3,626	3.5

Malaria control measures

The first comprehensive malaria control scheme with residual insecticides (2 rounds of 50 mgm. DDT per sq. ft. per round) was initiated in the district in 1950-51. The indoor residual

spraying continued for the next two years up to 1952-53. In 1953-54, the State Government adopted the National malaria control programme in collaboration with the Government of India and the United States technical co-operation mission (now called USAID). From 1953-54, two rounds of spraying were carried out in the unit area in the dosages of 100 mgm. DDT equivalent per sq. ft. for the first round and 50 mgm. DDT equivalent per sq. ft. during the second round. The spraying season was of six months' duration, starting from the middle of May for the first round and from the middle of August till the middle of November for the second round. During 1958-59, the control programme became the malaria eradication programme highlighting intensification of indoor residual spraying in both malarious areas and areas of low malaria incidence, elimination of the residual malaria infection in man by radical treatment of parasite positive cases detected in hospitals and dispensaries, and also in houses, reduction of the reservoir of residual infection — so that endemicity could not be re-established. The spraying operation was accordingly intensified since 1958-59. The case detection procedure also commenced from 1961-62 in all the police stations with special house visitors being appointed for the purpose at the rate of 100 per million population. On achieving good results, however, the spray operation was withdrawn from the whole district except Rampurhat subdivision, during 1963, and from Rampurhat subdivision during 1964. The disease being no longer of any consequence in the district, the anti-malaria programme started working under a 'maintenance phase' since 1965 on the recommendation of an independent appraisal team of the Government of India.

Malaria control staff

With a Medical Officer at the head of the eradication programme, the district was divided into four zones, each placed under a Malaria Supervisor. These zones were further subdivided into three or four sub-zones, each under a Malaria Inspector. Each Malaria Inspector on an average looked after an area with a population of about 80,000 — roughly the size of a police station. He, in his turn, had two or three spray gangs, each consisting of a Mate (Superior Field Worker) and six Field Workers. The mates and field workers were employed for a period of six months from the middle of May to the middle of November each year, who actually sprayed DDT. For carrying out active case detection, the area of a Malaria Inspector was further divided into surveillance sections, each with an average

population of 10,000, and was placed under a Surveillance worker. Four such Surveillance sections were placed under a Surveillance Inspector. When the quantum of residual infection, as detected by surveillance operation, reached either zero or a level so low, namely, 0.5 malaria cases per 1,000 population per year, that endemicity could not be established, the spraying operation was withdrawn. The surveillance operation, however, continued for two years more after withdrawal of the spray operation finally in 1964. With the 'maintenance phase' coming into operation the staff of the malaria control has taken up public health work, and the former Medical Officer of the malaria organization has been functioning as the Assistant District Health Officer and some others as Basic Health workers.

Effects of malaria control

Since the adoption of malaria control measures malaria has ceased to be a health problem in the district, and the death rate came down as low as 0.02 per thousand in 1961. The following is the picture of malaria cases treated in the hospitals in the district with corresponding death rate per thousand during the 1952-61 decade.

MALARIA CASES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1952-61

Year	Total No. of cases treated	Percentage of cases	Total No. of deaths	Death rate per 1,000
1952	19,029	24.4	1,421	1.3
1953	40,248	19.8	927	0.8
1954	13,934	7.4	959	0.9
1955	2,352	9.9	663	0.6
1956	14,691	5.0	608	0.5
1957	11,126	2.9	724	0.6
1958	10,104	2.3	437	0.3
1959	6,408	1.8	233	0.2
1960	9,024	1.6	60	0.04
1961	2,679	0.5	27	0.02

That the death rate from malaria has further gone down can be seen from the following figures. Still rural in character, the incidence of the disease has become very meagre.

DEATH RATE FROM MALARIA IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1962-65

	No. of deaths	Death rate per 1,000	No. of deaths	Death rate per 1,000
Year	urban	urban	rural	rural
1962	1	0.01	19	0.01
1963	1	0.01	33	0.02
1964	--	—	7	—
1965	—	—	8	—

Leprosy

Leprosy has been a scourge of the district for a long time. According to the census of 1901 among males 3.2 per mille and among females 1 per mille were affected with leprosy. O'Malley also wrote: "... this district (Birbhum — Ed.) and Bankura enjoy the unenviable notoriety of harbouring a greater number of lepers in proportion to the population than any other tract in India."[1] According to him the theory that leprosy was caused by the use of bad fish was untenable with regard to this district inasmuch as the people of the Birbhum district imported "very little fish" and it occupied a little part of their daily consumption.

The rate of prevalence, of the disease in Birbhum district is at present between 1 and 2% population, whereas the rate in West Bengal as a whole is 3.6. Although 75% of the cases are non-infectious, the problem rests in the fact that the infectious cases in their early stages remain undetected by laymen, and thus by free mixing healthy people are also infected.

Before independence the leprosy relief work was undertaken mostly by missionaries and non-official organizations, but after independence it has also been taken over by Government. To-

[1] L. S. S. O'Malley — Bengal District Gazetteers: Birbhum. Calcutta, 1910. p. 47.

wards the end of the First Five-Year Plan the National Leprosy Control scheme was initiated to start control centres in highly endemic areas with survey and case finding programme, health education and mass treatment with Sulphone. In addition to the existing centres subsidiary centres and treatment and study centres were established in rural areas for detecting cases and for mass treatment with Sulphone. The study and treatment centres in addition to such work carry out epidemiological studies and evaluate effects of therapy.

In this district activities in connexion with the eradication of leprosy are restricted mainly to house to house survey and microscopical examination of the disease, followed by preventive measures of health education and curative measures through free distribution of medicines till the disease is arrested or cured.

Each manned by a Medical Officer, trained in Leprosy, with an Assistant to help him, apart from a General Duty Attendant for each sub-centre, there are two public leprosy treatment centres opened during the Second Five-Year Plan period in this district with four sub-centres attached to each. They are, the Leprosy Treatment Centre at Barabagan in Suri town, with sub-centres located at the centre itself and at Dubrajpur Primary Health Centre, Amarpur Subsidiary Health Centre and Rajnagar Charitable Dispensary; and the Leprosy Treatment Centre at Sainthia Primary Health Centre with sub-centres located in this health centre and at Ahmadpur, at Mallarpur Charitable Dispensary and at Varkata at Densha, the latter being meant for the local tribal people and opened during the First Five-Year Plan period. Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation has a Leprosy Treatment Centre at Sriniketan, with sub-centres at Sarbanandapur and Bandholdanga, which are likely to be taken over by Government. An ex-leprosy patient runs a Leprosy Treatment Centre at Kalu Raipur.

The sub-centres remain open for treatment of patients a day in a week, and treat lepromatous, non-lepromatous and suspected patients.

The following is a table showing the number of patients treated between 1961 and 1967 visiting the centres and sub-centres both from inside and outside the areas for which the centres were opened.

TABLE OF LEPROSY PATIENTS TREATED IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-67[1]

Year	New cases Project Area	New cases Outside Project Area	Total attendance Old & New cases	Daily average attendance
SURI LEPROSY TREATMENT CENTRE				
1961	972	86	11,658	56.4
1962	1,437	128	15,570	74.8
1963	1,260	187	10,133	48.7
1964	934	1,543	12,646	60.8
1965	1,104	1,799	10,284	49.4
1966	1,254	2,079	9,538	45.8
1967	1,346	2,367	10,408	50.4
SAINTHIA LEPROSY TREATMENT CENTRE				
1961	270	—	821	31.7
1962	782	—	9,581	47.1
1963	677	—	11,812	57.1
1964	337	561	10,912	52.9
1965	463	826	13,691	66.1
1966	529	1,056	14,631	71.2
1967	630	1,244	16,112	78.2
VARKATA LEPROSY CLINIC				
1961	142	—	3,408	65.5
1962	161	—	3,300	66.0
1963	175	—	3,204	64.0
1964	149	—	3,380	65.0
1965	208	—	3,451	67.6
1966	254	—	3,387	65.1
1967	64	103	2,543	68.1

[1] Source: Chief Medical Officer of Health, Birbhum.

In the clinic at Sriniketan up to the end of June 1967, 703 cases were detected, 3,246 extra cases were under treatment and 532 cases had died or left or were not registered. It will be seen from the foregoing figures that patients are visiting the centres in increasing numbers over the years, and the average daily attendance is also stepping up as a result of health education conducted in the area.

Eye diseases

Incidence of eye diseases has been high of late in the district. Though no deaths from these diseases were reported still malnutrition, poor hygienic conditions and ignorance of proper personal hygiene etc. may have helped growth of the disease. The number of patients treated in the hospitals of the district in recent years may be clear from the following table.[1]

NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED FOR EYE DISEASES IN HOSPITALS OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-65

		1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Inflammatory diseases of eye	Outdoor	11,465	10,951	8,680	11,389	10,661
	Indoor	4	25	8	47	6
	Death	—	—	—	—	—
Cataract	Outdoor	916	582	231	353	261
	Indoor	69	367	24	274	84
	Death	—	—	—	—	—
Glaucoma	Outdoor	383	329	284	299	173
	Indoor	5	24	2	25	—
	Death	—	—	—	—	—
Other eye diseases	Outdoor	14,711	10,893	8,836	12,919	3,358
	Indoor	6	42	5	52	4
	Death	—	—	—	—	—

Enteric Diseases: diarrhoea, dysentery etc.

In the early part of this century enteric diseases were widespread for want of pure drinking water. Although the water supply position has improved a lot in general, the arid regions still face difficulties in this regard. The following table would, however, reveal the rural character of the disease in the district.

[1] Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Reports on the state of Health of West Bengal, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965 (unpublished).

DEATHS FROM DYSENTERY IN ALL FORMS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-65

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Urban	2	5	3	4	7
Rural	266	178	261	315	337

Cholera

Cholera was an annual feature of the district in the early years of this century. O'Malley also wrote: "Cholera appears in a sporadic form practically every year and sometimes becomes epidemic, but from 1892, when the present system of registering vital statistics was introduced, until 1905 the mortality caused by it in any one year was not greater than 3.15 per mille, that being the maximum reached in 1894. In 1906, 1907 and 1908, however, there were serious epidemics, causing a mortality of 4.66, 5.96 and 10.17 per mille respectively."[1] The following figures would reveal the decreasing rate of deaths from the disease over the last several years owing to greater number of inoculations and use of disinfectants as a public health measure throughout the district.

QUINQUENNIAL TABLE OF DEATHS FROM CHOLERA IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1945-60

	Actual deaths		Death rate per thousand	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1945	39	49	0.1	0.1
1950	123	124	0.2	0.2
1955	25	36	0.04	0.06
1960	4	8	0.006	0.01

That the disease is still rural character, and that for want of proper hygienic sense and prompt medical attendance, the disease takes its toll there, in whatever little extent it may be will be clear from the following table.

DEATHS FROM CHOLERA IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-65

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Urban	2	—	—	—	—
Rural	7	4	104	28	28

[1] loc. cit.

DEATHS FROM SELECTED CAUSES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1962-65

	1962		1963		1964		1965	
	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate
Accidents	213	0.01	198	0.1	216	0.1	141	0.09
Anaemias	37	0.02	44	0.03	62	0.04	54	0.03
Bronchitis	45	0.03	47	0.03	46	0.03	66	0.04
Child-birth	76	2.0	84	2.1	82	2.4	60	2.0
Cholera	4	—	104	0.07	28	0.02	28	0.02
Dysentery	183	0.1	264	0.2	319	0.2	344	0.21
Early Infancy diseases	1,835	1.2	1,758	1.1	1,575	1.0	1,170	0.7
Gastritis etc.	48	0.03	72	0.05	83	0.05	52	0.03
Influenza	10	0.01	7	—	4	—	6	—
Leprosy	59	0.04	75	0.05	64	0.04	64	0.04
Malaria	20	0.01	34	0.02	7	—	8	—
Malignant neoplasm	43	0.03	58	0.04	36	0.02	68	0.04
Measles	33	0.02	73	0.05	118	0.08	217	0.1
Metabolic & nutritional diseases	246	0.2	378	0.2	429	0.3	397	0.2
Pneumonia	88	0.06	115	0.08	157	0.1	223	0.1
Senility etc.	9,086	6.0	9,891	6.5	10,803	6.9	10,664	6.6
Smallpox	1	—	42	0.03	28	0.02	68	0.04
Snake-bite	26	0.02	28	0.02	35	0.02	27	0.02
Suicide	49	0.03	43	0.03	35	0.02	31	0.02
Tetanus	104	0.07	120	0.08	159	0.1	107	0.07
T. B. Pulmonary	60	0.04	66	0.04	61	0.04	41	0.03
T.B. Respiratory	126	0.08	154	0.1	122	0.08	114	0.07
Typhoid	153	0.1	145	0.09	116	0.08	121	0.08

Deaths from selected causes

A method of analysing mortality is to study the causes of death. The foregoing table[1] sets forth the actual number of deaths in the district and their rates per thousand (according to the population of 1961) during 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965

The causes claiming the highest number of victims are senility etc., early infancy diseases and metabolic and nutritional diseases in the foregoing table, but according to hospital statistics the first and second leading causes of deaths in hospitals are tetanus and complications of child-birth respectively. In 1964 deaths from tetanus in the public hospitals of the district numbered 94, being 10 per cent of the total number of deaths. In the same year, deaths from complications of child-birth numbered 61, accounting for 6.1 per cent of the total number of deaths. Tuberculoses of different types may have been caused by malnutrition while typhoid, dysentery, gastritis and cholera may have arisen from insanitation and malnutrition. Leprosy, peculiar to the district, accounts for some deaths, and the disease, though checked to a great extent by preventive and curative measures, has spread due to a lack of hygienic sense on the part of the illiterate people. Deaths from suicide and accidents have an urban background, taking their toll simultaneously with such rural afflictions as snake-bite.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES

In the pre-independence days there were 20 Government hospitals in this district, which included Auxiliary General and Famine Relief Emergency hospitals in rural areas as also the Departmental hospitals of the Police and the Jails and the hospitals in the district and subdivisional towns. The number of hospitals increased to 30, 44 and 50 at the end of the First Five-Year, Second Five-Year and Third-Five-Year plans respectively. At the end of 1967 the Government hospitals of all types, however, numbered 52.

The public hospitals, excluding Departmental hospitals, in the district had 235 beds in pre-independence days. The number of beds went up to 405, 580 and 602 at the end of the first three Five-Year plans respectively and to 686 at the end of 1967, of which 674 were free beds, and 12 paid cabins. Apart from 38 non-dieted emergency beds for maternity cases and 12 paid cabins there were 263, 73, 20, 183, 66, 26, 5 beds reserved respectively for medical, surgical, tuberculosis, maternity and gynaecology,

[1] Directorate of Health Services, Government of West Bengal—Annual Report on the state of Health of West Bengal (Part I), 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 (unpublished).

infectious diseases, eye diseases, E.N.T. diseases departments in these hospitals. The figures would thus indicate the extent of hospital facilities available in the district which may further be gauged from the following table showing the number of indoor and outdoor patients treated in such hospitals over the last few years.

NO. OF PATIENTS TREATED IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CENTRES OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-67

Year	Indoor patients	Daily Average of Outdoor patients	
		New and old	New
1961	16,473	3,352	1,685
1962	16,764	3,399	1,642
1963	16,072	3,685	1,696
1964	21,542	3,760	1,958
1965	27,140	4,093	2,181
1966	29,590	4,049	2,147
1967	29,483	4,250	2,180

The following table gives the distribution of staff in public hospitals and dispensaries of the district during 1963, 1964 and 1965.

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF IN THE PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1963-65

		1963	1964	1965
Medical Graduates	Male	32	35	40
	Female	2	2	1
Medical Officers	Male	78	76	63
	Female	1	1	—
Nurses	Trained	109	115	80
	Untrained	35	32	18
Compounders		76	154	52
	Doctor	8.3	8.6	*
No. of Beds per	Nurse	6.5	6.7	*
	Compounder	12.3	12.9	*

* Figures not available.

Apart from the staff mentioned above there were 7 midwives, 30 *Dāis*, 50 Health Assistants, 9 Lady Health Visitors and Public Health nurses, 12 members of other technical staff, 52 clerical hands and 238 members of the inferior staff in such institutions in 1965.

Besides the Suri Sadar hospital and the Rampurhat Subdivisional hospital, and the Departmental hospitals like Suri Jail hospital, Suri Police hospital and the Eastern Railway Health Unit at Rampurhat, the rural health centres numbered 48 at the end of 1967. About the setting up of health centres the Bhore Committee had initially recommended the opening of primary health centres with 75 beds each for every 20,000 people, but lack of funds and trained personnel resulted in its suggestion of the establishment of primary health centres with only 2 beds for maternity and 2 for emergency cases for every 20,000 people. The Government of West Bengal in modifying the recommendation in 1948 started setting up rural hospitals styled as Health Centres, each of which was to have 4 to 10 indoor beds for serving an area covered by a Union Board (approximately the same area now covered by an Anchal Panchayat). Union Health Centres within each police station were to be affiliated to the Thana Health Centres having a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 50 beds. All Health Centres in a subdivisional hospital having 68 indoor beds.

For opening a Union Health Centre local people were to donate 6 bighas of land and adequate cash, and, similarly, for a Thana Health Centre 20 bighas of land plus a cash amount were required to be donated. The scheme continued till 1955 when, at the instance of the Government of India, it was decided to open Primary Health Centres with 10 beds at the headquarters of every Community Development Block along with 2 or 3 Subsidiary Health Centres at suitable places in each Block area. Subsidiary Health Centres were to have only 2 non-dieted emergency beds. The following table gives the details of the existing health centres in the district.

LIST OF PUBLIC HEALTH CENTRES AND HOSPITALS IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1969

Name	Police Station	No. of beds
Amarpur (Gorgoria) S.H.C.	Sainthia	10
Balijuri S. H. C.	Dubrajpur	*2
Barrah P. H. C.	Khayrasol	10
Batikar S. H. C.	Ilambazar	*2
Bhabanipur S. H. C.	Rajnagar	*2
Bhromorkole S. H. C.	Sainthia	10
Biprakuri S. H. C.	Labhpur	10
Bolpur P. H. C.	Bolpur	50
Bonargram S. H. C.	Nanur	*2
Chatra Sub Centre	Murarai	without beds
Dubrajpur P. H. C.	Dubrajpur	20
Dunigram S. H. C.	Rampurhat	*2
Dwarka S. H. C.	Labhpur	*2
Ilambazar P. H. C.	Ilambazar	20
Jajigram S. H. C.	Murarai	4
Jashpur S. H. C.	Dubrajpur	*2
Jatra S. H. C.	Dubrajpur	*2
Kaitha S. H. C.	Nalhati	*2
Kastogora S. H. C.	Rampurhat	*2
Khujutipara S. H. C.	Nanur	*2
Kirnahar P. H. C.	Nanur	10
Kurumgram S. H. C.	Nalhati	10
Labhpur P. H. C.	Labhpur	20
Mahammad Bazar P. H. C.	Mahammad Bazar	20
Murarai P. H. C.	Murarai	10
Nalhati P. H. C.	Nalhati	20
Nanur Temporary Sub-centre	Nanur	without beds
Noapara S. H. C.	Mayureswar	*2
Paikar P. H. C.	Murarai	10
Panchosa S. H. C.	Bolpur	*2
Panchra S. H. C.	Khayrasol	*2
Puranagram S. H. C.	Mahammad Bazar	4
Rajgaon S. H. C.	Murarai	10
Ramkrishnapur S. H. C.	Labhpur	*2

LIST OF PUBLIC HEALTH CENTRES AND HOSPITALS — *Contd.*

Name	Police Station	No. of beds
Rampur S. H. C.	Mahammad Bazar	*2
Rampurhat Subdivisional Hospital	Rampurhat	68
Rudranagore S. H. C.	Murarai	10
Sainthia P. H. C.	Sainthia	50
Sangra S. H. C.	Sainthia	4
Satpalsa P. H. C.	Mayureswar	10
Satlove Kesba S. H. C.	Bolpur	*2
Sekeddah S. H. C.	Mahammad Bazar	*2
Sonarkundu S. H. C.	Nalhati	10
Srinidhipur S. H. C.	Sainthia	*2
Sultanpur S. H. C.	Suri	10
Sukur S. H. C.	Bolpur	10
Suri Jail Hospital	Suri	60
Suri Police Hospital	Suri	20
Suri Sadar Hospital	Suri	216
Tantipara P. H. C.	Rajnagar	10
Tarapur S. H. C.	Rampurhat	4
Varkata S. H. C.	Mahammad Bazar	*2

Suri Sadar Hospital

Suri Sadar Hospital with 47 beds was taken over by the Government in 1944. The number of beds is 216 at present. Earlier it was maintained by the Suri Municipality and the District Board, Birbhum and aided by private subscriptions. As far back as 1938 Government placed a Special Assistant Surgeon to the hospital for whose services a contribution of Rs. 76 per month was realised. The beds of the hospital are distributed according to the following table.

* Non-dieted Emergency Maternity beds.
P.H.C.—Primary Health Centre.
S.H.C.—Subsidiary Health Centre.

DISTRIBUTION OF BEDS IN SURI SADAR HOSPITAL: 1969

	Male		Female
Medical	28	General	45
Surgical	55	Maternity	34
Infectious diseases	13	Infectious diseases	13
T. B.	13	T. B.	13
Paying cabins	4	Paying cabins	4

The hospital has 32 acres of land for its indoor and outdoor departments. The District Medical Officer acts as the Superintendent of the hospital. There are 2 Surgeons, 1 Physician, 1 Gynaecologist, 1 Opthalmologist, 1 Anaesthist, 1 Lady Medical Officer, 1 Ear-nose-throat specialist, 1 Dental Surgeon, 1 Radiologist, 1 Medical Officer, Venereal Diseases clinic, 1 Medical Officer of the chest clinic, 1 Medical Officer of the domiciliary chest unit, I Medical Officer of the Static sterilization unit, 1 Medical officer on general duty. The following is the number of patients admitted in the indoor departments of the hospital in recent years along with the corresponding number of deaths.

NO. OF ADMISSIONS IN INDOOR DEPARTMENTS OF SURI SADAR HOSPITAL: 1964-68

Year	No. of admissions	Deaths
1964	9,490	441
1965	6,912	437
1966	9,804	351
1967	11,928	791
1968	12,214	576

Patients attended to in the outdoor department numbered 97,494; 1,07,591; 92,697; 99,505; 99,860 in 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 respectively.*

Rampurhat Subdivisional Hospital

Taken over by the Government in 1944, Rampurhat Subdivisional Hospital was earlier managed by a local body. Sprawling over 21 acres of land the hospital has 68 beds spread over different departments according to the following table.

* Source: C. M. O. H., Birbhum.

DISTRIBUTION OF BEDS IN RAMPURHAT SUBDIVISIONAL HOSPITAL: 1969

	Male	Female
Medical	15	4
Surgical	9	2
Eye	4	3
Infectious diseases	4	4
Gynaecologist	—	14
General	—	5
Paying cabins	2	2

The hospital has 1 Subdivisional Medical Officer, 1 Surgeon, 1 Physician, 1 Gynaecologist, 1 Opthalmologist, 1 Lady M.O., 1 Radiologist, 1 M.O., V.D. clinic and 1 M.O., Chest clinic. The following table would reveal the number of admissions in the indoor departments in recent years with the corresponding number of deaths.

NO. OF ADMISSION TO INDOOR DEPARTMENTS IN RAMPURHAT SUBDIVISIONAL HOSPITAL: 1964-68

Year	No. of admissions	Annual deaths
1964	5,527	115
1965	6,265	267
1966	7,981	288
1967	7,500	451
1968	9,492	553

The hospital also attended to 91,445, 1,03,790, 1,22,687, 1,33,730 and 1,45,468 patients in its outdoor departments in 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 respectively.†

Charitable dispensaries

The following is a list of charitable dispensaries in the district, formerly maintained by the District or the Union Boards and now by the Zilla Parishad or the Anchal Panchayats, along with the number of attendance there over several years.

† Source: District Health Officer, Birbhum.

LIST OF CHARITABLE DISPENSARIES IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT*

Located at	Police Station	No. of Attendance				
		1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
Belia Palsa†	Murarai	1,660	1,355	Not known	1,109	832
Bhadrapur†	Nalhati	2,518	2,112	2,322	1,101	990
Chella*	Ilambazar	3,995	4,571	4,250	5,536	4,689
Daspalsa†	Mayureswar	4,125	4,075	4,070	4,075	4,089
Kendguria†	Mayureswar	2,903	2,875	2,789	2,923	2,842
Kundala†	Khayrasol	4,110	4,338	4,059	3,345	3,175
Mallarpur†	Mayureswar	Not known	Not known	611	560	770
Mahammad Bazar	Mahammad Bazar	12,543	10,988	8,725	8,806	8,407
Nakrakonda†	Khayrasol	2,915	1,854	1,872	2,017	3,139
Nanur†	Nanur	6,141	6,876	5,709	8,649	6,318
Purandarpur†	Suri	8,234	4,571	4,250	5,536	4,689
Ratna†	Mayureswar	2,770	2,843	2,717	2,435	2,452

* Maintained by Zilla Parishad. and the rest by Anchal Panchayats.
† Government-aided.

It will be seen from the foregoing table that quite a large number of people frequent the charitable dispensaries for treatment of their ailments apart from the medical services obtained from the public health centres.

Medical administration

The Chief Medical Officer of Health is now in overall charge of medical and public health administration of the district. Formerly, the functions of the Civil Surgeon were limited only to the curative aspects of public health, while its preventive aspects were entrusted, under Bengal Act III of 1885, to the District and Local Boards and later to the Union Boards established under Bengal Act V of 1919. A District Health Officer, whose establishment costs were shared by the District Board and the Provincial Government, used to be appointed then under each District Board for this purpose. In 1946, the Provincial Government appointed the Bhore Commission to look to the structure of public health organization and on its recommendation the former Civil Surgeon was replaced in 1958 by the Chief Medical Officer of Health combining in him the functions of the District Head for both the curative and preventive sides of public health. The C.M.O.H. is now assisted by the District Medical Officer and the District Health Officer respectively for the curative and the preventive aspects of public health. Assisted by an Assistant C.M.O.H. in the district headquarters, the C.M.O.H. runs the administration on the medical side through the Superintendent of the District Hospital designated as the District Medical Officer, the Subdivisional Medical Officer of Rampurhat, and 46 Medical officers in-charge of the Primary and the Subsidiary Health centres in rural areas. On the public health side the C.M.O.H. is assisted by a District Health Officer, who looks after sanitation, food adulteration problem, epidemic control, and registration of vital events of the rural areas of the district through sanitary Inspectors of the rural public health circles, the Subdivisional Health officer of Rampurhat looking after similar activities of Rampurhat Subdivision, the Assistant District Health Officer, a former Medical officer of the Malaria Organization, and designed as such since the Malaria Organization came into its 'maintenance phase' since 1965 who practically functions as the Sadar Subdivision Health Officer in addition to his Malaria eradication activities, done through 3 Malaria Supervisors, 2 Sanitary Inspectors and a number of Basic Health Workers. The Medical officers of Primary and subsidiary Health Centres also look to the preventive aspect of health in their areas through

their Public Health Nurses and Health Visitors. As to the Family Planning Organization the C.M.O.H. is assisted by a District Family Planning Officer who has a number of Extension Educators under him, and Health Assistants and Field Workers attached to each Primary Health centre. The Medical Officers of the Primary Health centres also look after the Family Planning Work in their areas. There is another set-up under the C.M.O.H. called the School Health Unit immediately manned by a Medical Officer at the headquarters and by the Medical Officers in the Primary Health Centres, who examine the health of school children. The Assistant C.M.O.H. looks after the Drug Licences of Sadar Subdivision and the work connected with B.C.G.* Vaccination, and is helped by the Medical Officer of the B.C.G. team at headquarters. Regarding eradication of leprosy the C.M.O.H. is assisted by the medical officers of the two public leprosy treatment centres, where in each there are six leprosy assistants. Besides, there are 5 mobile medical units in the district. As to the anti-tuberculosis work in the district the C.M.O.H. is assisted by a District Tuberculosis Officer who co-ordinates the activities of different chest clinics.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS & NURSING HOMES

Pearson Memorial Hospital

Reserved for the students and staff of Visva-Bharati, the hospital traces its origin from a small dispensary, attached to Santiniketan Brahmacharya Vidyalay, which was started in 1911. At that time, the dispensary had a doctor and a compounder, being visited by the Assistant Surgeon from Bolpur Government hospital occasionally to attend serious cases. The late William Pearson, when he visited Santiniketan in 1912 and then began to participate in its activities in 1914, began to devise means for improving the existing hospital. On his sudden death in 1923, late Rabindranath Tagore thought it fit to perpetuate the memory of the deceased by opening a full-fledged hospital along with a child wing after his name. A building was constructed at a cost of about Rs. 14,000, obtained through generous gifts from friends and admirers, and the hospital started functioning in that building since 1928. It then consisted of an outdoor dispensary, an indoor ward with 12 beds and an operation theatre. Apart from the outdoor department, the hospital now has 40 indoor beds including the infectious ward. In the indoor ward 307, 338, 294, 337 and 501 patients took admission in 1964-65, 1965-66, 1966-67, 1967-68 and 1968-69 respectively.

* Bacillus Calmette-Guerin.

In 1968-69, only 3 patients died in the indoor ward. The recurring maintenance grant for the hospital is sanctioned by the University Grants Commission, while no non-recurring grant is received by it from Government or any other agency.[1]

Bolpur Nursing Home

Opened in June 1963, Bolpur Nursing Home, a private institution in Bolpur police station and located at Sriniketan, has 6 indoor beds, each bed costing Rs. 10 per day. It admitted 58, 113, 112, 92, 97 and 100 patients in 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 respectively. Dealing with maternity and gynaecological cases it has a Specialist Medical Officer, a Senior trained nurse and two untrained midwives.

Sainthia Nursing Home

Opened in July 1962, Sainthia Nursing Home, a private institution located at Sainthia, in the police station of the same name has 20 indoor beds. In this Nursing Home 100, 110, 109, 102, 119, 115 and 120 patients took admission in 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 respectively, of whom 1 died in 1963, 3 died in 1965 and 1 died in 1968.

Suri Nursing Home

Opened in April 1968, Suri Nursing Home, a private nursing home located in Suri town, has so far 3 indoor beds.

Niramoy Sanatorium Giridanga

Situated at Giridanga in Dubrajpur police station at a distance of about 25 miles from Santiniketan on Bolpur Suri highway and about 6 miles from Dubrajpur railway station, this sanatorium for T.B. patients was opened in 1955, being a constituent part of the organization styled 'Niramoy' of Calcutta. Covering roughly an area of 168 acres, the Sanatorium, opening with 62 beds and a small outdoor wing has now a bed-strength of 331 and an enlarged outpatients' department with a domiciliary unit.

Outdoor department

Manned by at least 12 Specialists and Medical Officers, the outdoor chest clinic of the Sanatorium, functioning since 1956, attended to the patients as shown below between 1961-62 and 1965-66:

	No. of new & old cases	No. of new cases	No. of new Pulmonary T. B. Cases	No. of new cases other than Pulmonary T. B.
1960-61	2,701	1,522	916	220
1961-62	3,700	4,210	2,914	511
1963-64	4,144	2,910	577	2,333
1964-65	9,575	4,165	742	3,423
1965-66	14,516	6,345	1,418	4,927

[1] Source: Deputy Registrar (Academic), Visva-Bharati.

The total charge for complete investigation and diagnosis of a chest case is Rs. 8 including laboratory examinations and a chest skiagram, though a number of free and half-free cases, ranging from Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 6 only are granted daily.

Indoor department

As to the indoor department the average duration of stay per patient in the Sanatorium is 10 months 24 days. The following table will reveal the number of patients treated, admitted, and died in and discharged from the Sanatorium over the last few years:

	No. of patients treated	No. admitted	No. discharged	No. died
1960-61	203	143	116	13
1961-62	380	182	127	18

Thoracic surgical unit

The surgical beds of the Sanatorium has been increased from 9 to 20 in 1967. The surgical unit has been functioning since 1965. During the period between September 1965 and March 1966 the team of speialists made 34 successful lung resections and 36 thoracoplasty cases (both 1st and 2nd stage).

Domiciliary unit

As to domiciliary treatment the Sanatorium with the help of the State Health Department has started distributing free drugs to indigent T.B. patients on selective and zonal basis. The State Health Department has created the post of a Medical Officer here for the domiciliary unit, which, still lies vacant. A Health Visitor has, however, joined the Unit. A motor vehicle has also been placed by the State Health Department for the Unit for rendering domiciliary services to a large number of sick patients in the neighbouring areas.

Nurses' Training

A two-year training course for pupil nurses has been introduced in the Sanatorium in 1959, and some 44 girls in 2 batches were absorbed in the permanent nursing service of the institution on completion of their training. In 1965 the third batch of 22 girls, including 18 selected on the recommendation of the Women's Resettlement Branch of the State Refugee, Relief & Rehabilitation Department, received similar training and were absorbed in the permanent nursing service of the institution.

The sanatorium has a well-furnished pathological laboratory, for which the State Health Department sanctioned a sum of Rs. 18,000 in 1964-65 for further improvement, and a well-equipped radiological department, which has been improved on

the modern lines in 1964-65 at an expenditure of a lakh of rupees.

Besides the newly-built staff quarters, the Sanatorium has also a Post Office named "Niramoy Sanatorium, Giridanga", a poultry farm for supplying table eggs daily to the hospital patients, a Consumers' Co-operative stores, a temple of Lord Siva, patients' library, a guest house for the patients' wards etc.

PUBLIC HEALTH WELFARE ORGANIZATION

Family Planning

During the First Five-year Plan family planning work was undertaken as part of Government-sponsord development activities to cope with the limited economic resources of the country. The effort continued and was intensified during the Second Five-year Plan period. During both the periods, however, the approach to Family Planning was a "clinical approach". In the Second Five-year Plan period liberal grants were given to official and non-official agencies to improve and augment clinic facilities. Though at that time several health institutions were utilised as service centres, they achieved little in bringing down birth rates. During the Third Five-year Plan the State Government launched a comprehensive campaign of Family Welfare Planning with a 100 per cent Central subsidy on non-recurring and 75 per cent on recurring outlays, the latter being augemented to 100 per cent in 1969-70. It integrated within its fold both maternity and child health programmes for a better social balance than could be achieved merely through population control. In rural areas contraceptives were supplied free, while in urban areas their distribution was tagged to incomes — those with a monthly income up to Rs. 200 receiving them free, between Rs. 300 and Rs. 500 at half price and above Rs. 500 at full price. The final year of the Third Five-year Plan saw the campaign strengthened when the administrative set-up was re-organized. At first Intra-uterine contraceptive device (I.U.C.D.) or insertion of 'Loop' was very popular, and in 1965-66, 7,926 I.U.C.D. cases were done in the district, which figures came down to 3,681 and 1,221 in 1966-67 and 1967-68 respectively owing to various complications, both immediate and remote. Women also became apprehensive of the method and it fell into disrepute. In contrast to I.U.C.D. vasectomy is a permanent method and is practised upon males having more than 3 children. Formerly misconceived as castration, vasectomy is becoming popular over the years through health education, though the incentive of cash payment of Rs. 18 to the individual undergoing operation, who mostly come from the poorer section of the rural populace, is not

ruled out. In this connexion, it may be stated that in 1965-66 there were only 411 vasectomy cases, which increased to 715 and 10,739 in 1966-67 and 1967-68 respectively. The other mode of operation on the female, namely, tubectomy, keeps the figures steady as in 1965-66 there were 251 such cases, the number coming down to 249 in 1966-67 and again going up to 345 in 1967-68.

As to the administrative set-up of the Family Planning Organization, the C.M.O.H. is helped by a whole-time District Family Planning Officer who has a number of Extension Educators and other staff under him. In the urban areas of Suri and Rampurhat there are Family Welfare Planning Centres located in the Sadar town and subdivisional hospitals. The following is a list of Family Welfare Planning Centres located in the rural areas of the district.

LIST OF RURAL FAMILY WELFARE PLANNING CENTRES: BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1968[1]

Located at	Police station	Post office
Bolpur P.H.C.	Bolpur	Bolpur
Borrah P.H.C.	Khayrasol	Borrah
Dubrajpur P.H.C.	Dubrajpur	Dubrajpur
Ilambazar P.H.C.	Ilambazar	Ilambazar
Kastogora P.H.C.	Rampurhat	Kastogora
Kirnahar P.H.C.	Nanur	Kirnahar
Koitha S.H.C.	Nalhati	Koitha
Labhpur P.H.C.	Labhpur	Labhpur
Mahammad Bazar P.H.C.	Mahammad Bazar	Mahammad Bazar
Murarai P.H.C.	Murarai	Murarai
Nalhati P.H.C.	Nalhati	Nalhati
Paikar P.H.C.	Murarai	Paikar
Sainthia P.H.C.	Sainthia	Sainthia
Satpalsa P.H.C.	Mayureswar	Basudevpur
Sultanpur S.H.C.	Suri	Abinashpur
Tantipara P.H.C.	Rajnagar	Tantipara
Tarapur S.H.C.	Rampurhat	Tarapur

A voluntary organization also runs a Family Planning Centre at Debagram Narimangal Samity, P.O. Kareya in Nanur police station.

[1] Source: District Family Planning Officer, Birbhum.

School hygiene

The school hygiene work of the district is co-ordinated by a Medical Officer in the headquarters, who is under direct control of the C.M.O.H. In the urban areas the work is generally done by the Health Officers of the Municipalities, whereas in rural areas the work is done by the Medical Officers of the rural health centres, which function as School health clinics in addition to their normal activities. Vaccination, inoculation are also administered by the Sanitary Inspectors in schools. The Medical Officers, generally, check up the health of students, record if their vision is defective, tonsils enlarged, spleens enlarged, teeth virous or if they are suffering from skin diseases and malnutrition etc. and prescribe medicines for cure.

The following figures[1] would reveal the high incidence of defective health of the students of the district over several years:

Year	No. of School health clinics	No. of students examined	Percentage defective	Percentage of population covered by medical examination
1961	37	18,263	30.75	58.55
1962	37	19,814	30.75	61.65
1963	38	26,585	31.85	74.00
1964	38	25,813	26.45	67.55
1965	39	24,826	22.85	59.65
1966	40	24,768	21.75	51.25
1967	45	31,025	33.75	57.25
1968	46	32,105	33.45	59.15

UNICEF Skim Milk Feeding programme

Started earlier, the UNICEF* Skim Milk Feeding Programme was suspended for a while, but resumed again from 1964-65. The milk feeding work is executed both through Government channel and private voluntary organizations. In the district's Primary Health Centres and some Maternity and Child Health Centres with 100 beneficiaries in each are to run milk feeding centres under the overall control of the C.M.O.H., who makes arrangements for storage, transport and supervision through his

[1] Source: Chief Medical Officer of Health, Birbhum.

* United Nations Children's Fund (formerly, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund).

officers. The C.M.O.H. is in overall charge of the scheme so far as it relates to the Primary Health Centres and other public Maternity and Child Health Centres. The District Health Officer helps the C.M.O.H. in supervising the feeding centres. The Voluntary Organizations run their feeding centres under their own supervision. In the State headquarters there is a Special Officer and two Inspectors who supervise all the feeding centres in the State.

The following figures would reveal the number of feeding centres operating as also the number of benificiaries in the district in respect of this scheme.

UNICEF MILK POWDER DISTRIBUTED IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT

Year	Government Agencies	No. of feeding centres	Total No. of beneficiaries	Quantity of Milk Powder distributed (lbs.)
1964-65	C.M.O.H.			
	Birbhum	15	1,200	17,010
1965-66	-do-	-do-	1,500	32,500
1966-67	-do-	-do-	1,500	15,764
1967-68	-do-	-do-	1,500	25,800
1968-69 (May)	-do-	-do-	1,500	9,990

Besides the Government agencies, voluntary organizations like Sri R. K. Sevayatan through its 3 centres at Dubrajpur, Suri and Batikar distributed 8,300 lbs., 6,510 lbs. and 4,300 lbs. of milk powder among 300 beneficiaries in 1966-67, 1967-68 and 1968-69 (May) respectively.[1]

SANITATION

In the early years of this century the sanitation of the district was very poor, more so, because drinking water was scare and there was a prejudice against vaccination. O'Malley wrote: "The value of communal hygiene is not understood, tanks being polluted and rubbish allowed to accumulate promiscuously. Communicable diseases, such as small-pox, are allowed to spread

[1] Source: Special Officer, UNICEF Milk Feeding Programme, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta.

without measures being taken for segregation. Cholera is treated with greater respect, the people being afraid of the disease, but no care is taken to preserve drinking water in a state of purity during its visitation."[1]

The sanitary condition of district has of course imporved a lot from what it was at the beginning of this century. The public health and sanitation set-up of the district may be categorized into two parts, namely, urban and rural. In the municipal towns of Suri, Bolpur and Rampurhat, the matter is looked after by the municipalities through their Health Officers, who are helped by Sanitary Inspectors, Conservancy Inspectors, Sanitary Assistants and Conservancy Assistants. They look after conservancy, water supply, drainage, epidemic control, preventation of food adulteration, issuing of licences, compilation of vital statistics, slum clearance, maintenance of burning ghats, and burial grounds and administration of slaughter houses, markets and *hats*. In the rural areas the District Health Officer, under the control of the C.M.O.H., through the Sanitary Inspectors look after environmental sanitation, epidemic control, prevention of food adulteration, health education and administration of preventive measures like vaccination and inoculation. Formerly belonging to the District Board, the services of the public health staff in the rural areas, were provincialized with effect from 1.1.1959 bringing them under the control of the C.M.O.H. With the introduction of the Panchayati Raj, the Zilla Parishad replaced the District Board and under the West Bengal Zilla Parishads Acts, the Public Health Standing Committee of the Parishad now draws up and executes water-supply schemes in the district out of the Zilla Parishad's own funds augmented by such economic assistance as is received from the State Government.

Water Supply: rural

In the beginning of this century tanks were the only sources of drinking water supply. A third of the district, being rocky, is still not suitable for sinking tube-wells, the easiest means of water supply, where experiments with local rivulets are being carried out. But the tube-wells, and in some places masonry wells, being the only sources of drinking water supply, were excuted by the State Government through their Rural Water Supply agencies and the District Board. At present, however, rural water supply schemes are executed by the Block Development Officer under the Local Development Scheme, by the Tribal

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[1] op. cit. p. 47.

Welfare Department, by the Zilla Parishad and by the Rural Water Supply Department of the Public Health Engineering Directorate of the State Government. The latter has an Assistant Engineer in the district headquarters to look after the execution of water supply schemes, the pin-pointed sites being supplied by the District Officer. He has also maintenance squads, comprising a Mechanic, an Assistant Fitter and two Helpers, in each police station to carry out repairs of all Government-sponsored tube-wells in the respective areas. So far, there are approximately 4,500 tube-wells and 500 masonry wells in the district, which were sponsored by Government.

Water Supply: Urban: Suri

Completed in 1928 under the supervision of the Public Health Engineering Directorate, and supplying water over an area comprising 3 sq. miles, the water works of the Suri Municipality, earlier described in Chapter XII, has the Mayurakshi river, *running* to the north-west of Suri town, for its source of water supply. For bringing in water, and infiltration gallery has been constructed in Sitamari canal, a local diversion of the Mayurakshi river. Approximately, 3,00,000 gallons of water a day is obtained from the gallery pumped through two 50 h.p. diesel pumps, stored in two reservoirs of joint capacity of 1,35,000 gallons, and then distributed through a net work of pipes.[1] There are 412 hydrants and 200 house connexions of taps in Suri town. For a tap connexion one has to pay Rs. 250 as *selāmi* and Rs. 10 as supervision charges.

Water Supply: Urban: Bolpur

Started during the Third Five-Year Plan at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 8,64,000 and expected to be completed this year, the Bolpur Water supply system has for its source two 6 inch dia. deep tube-wells of average depth of 1,100 ft. each with a supply of 40,000 gallons per hour. The water is proposed to be stored in a reservoir of 50,000-gallon capacity for distribution through a net-work of pipes.[2]

Water Supply: Urban: Sainthia

Started during the Third Five-Year Plan period, and expected to be completed in 1970 at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 6,03,000 the Sainthia water supply scheme has for its source the Mayurakshi river, running by the side of the township. Four 6 inch. dia. tube-wells will be sunk in the river-bed, and the expected supply of water is 8,00,000 gallons per day. A reservoir of 60,000-gallon capacity and the distribution system are being constructed at present.[3]

[1,2 & 3] Source: Assistant Engineer, Rural Water supply, Public Health Engineering Directorate, Government of West Bengal, Birbhum.

A proposal for water supply schemes in the Rampurhat municipal area is also there in the hands of the Government.

In the municipal areas of the district the municipalities incurred expenditures for water supply to the extent of Rs. 21,823[1] in 1950-51, Rs. 29,244[2] in 1953-54 and Rs. 41,108[3] in 1957-58, which may appear meagre in view of the fast growth in urban population.

Drainage & sewerage

Because of its undulating physical features in most places the district enjoys facilities for quick drainage. O'Malley also noted earlier (1910): "Its healthiness is largely due to its physical formation, for the surface is undulating, the soil is porous, and the rivers, streams and valleys that traverse the country afford ample facilities for drainage." As in other places of this State, drainage and sewerage, however, remain problems of urban areas, which have become congested over the years through births and immigrations. Still the problem is being squarely faced by the municipalities, which look after this part of the public health, in their areas. The municipalities of Birbhum, as evident from the tables prepared by the State Statistical Bureau,[4] expended for drainage and conservancy respectively Rs. 8,222 and Rs. 41,307 in 1950-51, Rs. 12,487 and Rs. 69,212 in 1953-54 (except Bolpur municipality), and Rs. 30,130 and Rs. 1,16,685 in 1957-58.

In Suri town

The Suri municipality incurred the following expenditure in different years for drainage and sewerage work.

EXPENDITURE ON DRAINAGE & SEWERAGE, SURI: 1947-55

Area Served		Approx. population served	Total capital cost up to 31 December	Annual Cost of maintenance
1947[5]	2.0 sq. miles	12,000	Rs. 54,292	Rs. 2,353
1951[6]	2.1 sq. miles	12,100	Rs. 54,292	Rs. 1,822
1955[7]	2.0 sq. miles	12,000	Rs. 66,032	Rs. 12,536

[1] Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau- Statistical Abstract: West Bengal, 1951, Calcutta, 1954. p. 299.
[2] Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau- Statistical Abstract: West Bengal, 1956, Calcutta, 1958. p. 361.
[3] Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau- Statistical Abstract: West Bengal, 1961, Calcutta, 1965. p. 373.
[4] loc. cit.
[5] Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Report on the Health of the Population of West Bengal: Calcutta, p. 372.
[6] Govt of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Report on the Health of the Population of West Bengal, 1951. Calcutta, 1953. p. 414.
[7] Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Report on the state of Health of West Bengal, 1955. Calcutta, 1960. p. 475.

That vaccination was doing a great deal before independence to eradicate small pox from the district will be evident from the following table.[1]

Vaccination

Year	No. of successful vaccinations	Death rate from small-pox-per mille
1938-39	58,457	0.05
1939-40	55,141	0.02
1940-41	51,655	0.02
1941-42	65,210	0.07
1942-43	69,219	0.14
1943-44	48,370	0.1
1944-45	36,654	0.2
1945-46	1,11,343	0.8
1946-47	1,03,576	0.4

Since independence the work of vaccination has continued in good earnest as will be clear from the following figures:

Year	No. of successful vaccinations	Death rate from small-pox-per mille
1947*	54,661	0.05
1948*	38,391	0.1
1949*	44,628	0.004
1950*	61,558	0.1
1951**	1,83,074	0.7
1952**	1,51,311	0.5
1953**	1,00,254	—
1954**	1,35,254	0.02
1955**	1,23,640	0.001
1956**	94,236	0.002
1957**	1,45,660	0.07
1958**	2,59,645	0.5
1959**	1,69,872	0.1
1960**	1,21,648	—

[1] Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Report on the Health of the Population of West Bengal, 1947. Calcutta. pp. 356-7.

* Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Report on the state of Health of West Bengal, 1955. Calcutta, 1960. p. 444.

** Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services — Annual Report on the state of Health of West Bengal, 1960. Calcutta, 1962. pp. 808-9.

Also inoculations

The work of vaccination and inoculation continues in right earnest in recent years which will be amply proved from the following figures.[1]

NO. OF VACCINATIONS AND INOCULATIONS ADMINISTERED IN BIRBHUM DISTRICT: 1961-67

Year	Primary Vaccinations	Re-Vaccinations	A.C. Inoculations	T.A.B.C. Inoculations
1961	24,603	2,11,621	1,15,669	33,728
1962	33.054	2,65,368	96,175	32,935
1963	64.176	4,96,261	1,85,381	31,584
1964	52,166	3,56,585	1,20,042	30,792
1965	44,843	1.04.335	1,71,405	32,940
1966	77,849	2,11,048	61,105	34,954
1967	46,859	2,09,693	93,237	57,536

In Suri town

The following table[2] shows the number of vaccinations and inoculations done in the Suri Municipal area in recent years.

NO. OF VACCINATIONS AND INOCULATIONS ADMINISTERED IN SURI MUNICIPAL AREA: 1961-68

Year	Primary Vaccinations	Re-Vaccinations	A.C. Inoculations
1961-62	341	6,635	475
1962-63	180	2,453	318
1963-64	475	7,025	251
1964-65	282	8,390	41
1965-66	502	11,815	49
1966-67	290	10,241	55
1967-68	335	14,043	60

[1] Source: District Health Officer, Birbhum.
[2] Source: Chairman, Suri Municipality, Suri.

CHAPTER XV

PUBLIC LIFE AND SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

REPRESENTATION OF THE DISTRICT IN THE STATE AND UNION LEGISLATURES

At the time of General Elections of 1967 the district had 12 single-numbered (Assembly) Vidhan Sabha constituencies, namely Nanur, Bolpur, Labhpur, Dubrajpur, Rajnagar, Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Mayureswar, Rampurhat, Hansan, Nalhati and Murarai. Four of these, namely, Nanur, Rajnagar, Mayureswar and Hansan were reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates.

For the election to the Lok Sabha (House of the people) the district was divided into two constituencies, Birbhum and Bolpur, the former being reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate. The Birbhum constituency covered the Vidhan Sabha constituencies of Rajnagar, Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Rampurhat, Hansan, Nalhati and Murarai, the Bolpur Parliamentary constituency covering the remaining Assembly constituencies of the district.

In accordance with the Delimitation of Council Constituencies (West Bengal) Order, 1951, as amended by the Delimitation of Council Constituencies (West Bengal) Amendment Order, 1961, the local authorities of the Birbhum district formed a Vidhan Parishad constituency while the district as a whole was included in the West Bengal South-West Graduates' constituency along with Bankura, Purulia, Midnapur and Hooghly districts and within the West Bengal Teachers' constituency which included four other districts — Bankura, Burdwan, Purulia and Midnapur. The Vidhan Parishad in the state has been abolished with effect from 1970.

In the First General Elections of 1952 the district had 7 constituencies, four of them double-membered. Of the eleven seats contested the Congress captured 9, the Krishak Mazdur Praja Party one and the Forward Bloc Marxist one. The successful Congress candidates polled 34.69% of the valid votes polled in Nalhati, 18.53% and 16.80% for the two seats in Nanur, 17.99% and 17.19% for the two seats in Bolpur, 19.24% and 19.23% for the two seats in Suri, 28.22% in Khayrasol and 24.13% for one of the two seats in Rampurhat. In the last mentioned constituency the Forward Bloc Marxist candidate who secured one of the two seats obtained 24.89% of the valid votes and in Murarai the successful Krishak Mazdur Praja Party candidate polled 25.82% of the valid votes cast.

In the Lok Sabha elections for this term the double membered Birbhum constituency, which covered besides the Birbhum district parts of Malda and Murshidabad, both the seats went to the Congress Party candidates securing respectively 23.18% and 21.80% of valid votes polled.

Second General Elections 1957

In the Second General Elections to the Vidhan Sabha 10 members were returned from 6 constituencies in the district, 4 of these being double-membered constituencies. Of these 6 went to the Congress, one to the Praja Socialist Party, 2 to the Communist Party of India and one to the Independent candidate. The successful Congress candidates respectively secured 22.62% and 17.75% of the valid votes cast in the Nalhati constituency and 24.60% and 23.15% in the Rajnagar constituency. Both these constituencies were double-membered. The Congress candidate who was elected from the Bolpur constituency polled 54.81% of the valid votes polled. In the Suri constituency the successful Praja Socialist Party candidate secured 30.12%. The second seat in the constituency, reserved for Scheduled Tribes, went to a Communist Party of India candidate who got 25.53%. In the two-membered Rampurhat constituency the Independent candidate who was elected along with a Communist Party candidate secured 31.20% of the valid votes polled, the latter securing 18.74% of the votes. The Communist Party candidate contested from the seat reserved for Scheduled Castes. In Labhpur, another Communist Party of India candidate who was returned obtained 47.08%.

Lok Sabha

In the elections to the Lok Sabha this year the constituency of Birbhum, which was double-membered, covered in addition to the district the Katwa subdivision and the Purbasthali police station of the Burdwan district. One of the seats was reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate. Both the candidates returned from this constituency were set up by the Indian National Congress Party and the votes polled by the successful candidates were respectively 32.6% and 26.7% of the valid votes cast.

In 1962 the district was divided into 10 Vidhan Sabha constituencies all of them single-membered. The constituencies were: Labhpur, Bolpur, Dubrajpur, Rajnagar, Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Mayureswar, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Murarai. Of these Rajnagar, Mayureswar and Nalhati constituencies were reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates and Mahammad Bazar for a Scheduled Tribe candidate. Four of the seats, namely Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Rampurhat and Nalhati went to the Congress candidates.

The Communist Party of India won 2 seats, Labhpur and Mayureswar; the Forward Bloc won Dubrajpur and Rajnagar; and two seats, namely Bolpur and Murarai, went to Revolutionary Socialist Party candidates.

The percentage of valid votes polled by successful candidates in each of the constituencies was: Labhpur, C.P.I. 37.73; Bolpur, R.S.P. 66.36; Dubrajpr, Forward Bloc 57.28; Rajnagar (S.C.), Forward Bloc 47.33; Suri, Congress 51.45; Mahammad Bazar, Congress 45.09; Mayureswar, C.P.I. 44.35; Rampurhat, Congress 49.76; Nalhati, Congress 42.48 and Murarai, R.S.P. 38.10.

Lok Sabha

For the elections to the Lok Sabha this year, the Birbhum Constituency in this district covered seven Assembly constituencies, viz. Rajnagar, Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Mayureswar, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Murarai. The seat which was reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate was won by the Indian National Congress Party polling about 43% of the valid votes polled.

As already mentioned, in 1967 the district was divided into 12 single-membered constituencies for elections to the State Vidhan Sabha. Of these, 6 went to the Indian National Congress Party, 2 to the Forward Bloc, 4 seates were won by Independent candidates. The percentage of valid votes polled by successful candidates was as follows:

Congress candidate — Nanur 43.93, Labhpur 59.24, Suri 37.32, Mahammad Bazar 53.70, Mayureswar 50.89 and Hansan 41.75.

Forward Bloc — Rajnagar 46.02 and Rampurhat 35.61.

The successful Independent candidates secured in Bolpur 52.97% of the valid votes, in Dubrajpur 36.26%, in Nalhati 27.41% and in Murarai 41.37%

Lok Sabha Elections 1967

For the Lok Sabha elections of the year, as stated earlier in this chapter, the district was divided into two single-membered constituencies, Birbhum and Bolpur, the former reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate. Both the seats went to the Congress Party, the successful candidate from Bolpur securing 52.73% of the valid votes polled and the one from Birbhum securing 36.27%.

Lok Sabha Elections 1971

As stated earlier, the two Lok Sabha seats continued in the district. A C.P.M. candidate obtaining 1,15,591 votes out of 2,54,684 votes polled in favour of all candidates was returned to Lok Sabha from the Bolpur Lok Sabha constituency in 1971. The same year, another C.P.M. candidate obtaining 80,712 votes

out of 2,03,890 polled in favour of all candidates was returned to Lok Sabha from the Birbhum (Scheduled Castes) constituency.

Mid-term Elections 1969

Consequent on the dissolution of the State Assembly in 1968 mid-term elections for all the Vidhan Sabha seats were held in early 1969. In the 12 Birbhum constituencies the Communist Party (Marxist) secured 3 seats, the Forward Bloc 4, Socialist Unity Centre 2, and Bangla Congress 1. The above mentioned party candidates were set up by the United Front who also supported the successful Independent candidates contested and won the Bolpur and Nalhati seats. The front composed of 12 parties opposing the Congress comprised the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party (Marxist), the Bangla Congress, the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Samjukta Socialist Party, the Socialist Unity Centre, the Lok Sevak Sangha, the Gurkha League, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, the Workers Party and the Forward Bloc (Marxist).

Of the successful Communist Party (Marxist) candidates the one from Nanur secured 57.29% of the valid votes polled in the constituency, the one from Labhpur 52.61% and the one from Mayureswar 56.11%. The Socialist Unity Centre candidates elected from Suri and Murarai respectively polled 57.44% and 54.14% valid votes. The Forward Bloc candidates who won from the Dubrajpur, Rajnagar, Rampurhat and Hansan secured respectively 45.72%, 47.47%, 57.42% and 47.20% and the Independent candidate from Bolpur supported by the United Front polled 60.58% of the valid votes while another Independent candidate from Nalhati, also backed by the United Front won 53.73%.

Hold of Political Parties on the District

Before the hold of individual political parties on the electorate in the district is assessed on the basis of the measure of valid votes secured by each it may be worthwhile taking into account the change reflected by the voters' participation in the elections. At the First General Elections the proportion of the valid votes polled to the total votes at the Vidhan Sabha constituencies averaged 33.11 per cent. It ranged between 42.23 per cent at Nalhati and 28.20 at Suri.

In the Second General Elections the Vidhan Sabha constituencies showed a rise in the proportion of the valid votes polled to the total number of votes in the constituencies. It was 38.88 per cent of the latter. Taking individual constituencies into consideration the percentage was as high as 52.48 per cent in Labhpur and as low as 35 per cent in Nalhati.

In the Third General Elections the percentage was 39.69, although in the Murarai constituency it fell as low as 27.55 and in Mahammad Bazar 25.91.

The above figures are exclusive of the votes rejected at each constituency which however is a small percentage of the total votes cast.

In the Fourth General Elections in 1967 the percentage of valid votes cast in relation to the total number of votes in the district was as high as 49.06. This excludes the rejected votes which ranged between 4 to 8 per cent. The percentage of the total votes polled to the total electorate varied between 61.80 in Murarai and 35.48 in Rajnagar.

In the 1969 mid-term elections 55.43 per cent of the total electorate strength voted, the percentage of valid votes to the electors being 53.88. In Murarai the percentage of votes polled to total number of votes in the constituency rose to 60.60, the highest for the whole district. At Rajnagar where the percentage was lowest it was 43.23 a figure higher than in the previous election.

The results of the four General Elections and the mid-term elections reveal significant changes in the hold of different political parties in the district in each successive election. At the time of the First General Elections the predominant position of the Congress Party over its rival parties was evident. The successful Congress candidates for the Lok Sabha elections secured 1,16,734 and 1,90,722 votes or 23.19 and 21.80 per cent of the valid votes polled. Their nearest rival the Hindu Mahasabha candidate polled 90,311 or 17.94% of the votes and the Krishak Mazdur Praja Party nominee polled 88,919 or 11.70%. The two Socialist Party candidates and an R.S.P. candidate could secure not more than 7.73%, 5.38% and 4.07% of the votes respectively.

The Assembly elections give a clearer picture of the district as the Parliamentary constituency covered considerable areas outside the district. In the First General Elections the Congress had a predominant hold on the voting public. The party secured 9 out of the 11 seats in the district and 37.29% of the valid votes polled. Congress candidates were set up for all the 11 seats of the district and, even where they were defeated, the Congress candidates polled second highest. The other parties deserving consideration are the K.M.P.P. and the Forward Bloc Marxist, each having one of their candidates returned. The

influence of Forward Bloc Marxist Party was marked in the Rampurhat constituency where the party not only won one of the two seats, but its two candidates polled between themselves 48.69% of the valid votes polled, the two Congress candidates one of them the other winner from the constituency secured 45.87%.

The Krishak Mazdur Praja Party the other party to register a win elsewhere in the district gave in the Khayrasol constituency the victorious Congress candidate a close fight, the latter winning by as many as 204 votes. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party of India set up 5 and 4 candidates respectively but did not succeed in winning any of them. But in 4 seats out of a total of 1,07,35 valid votes cast Hindu Mahasabha candidates totalled 22,574 votes or 21.02% of the votes and the Congress 36,210 or 33.7%. In the Nalhati constituency the Hindu Mahasabha candidate who lost the seat to his rival candidate of the Congress secured 21.69% of the valid votes, the winner scoring 34.89%. In the Nanur constituency again, the Hindu Mahasabha candidate polled 10,759 votes, his nearest rival the winning Congress candidate securing 11,810. In the Khayrasol constituency also the Hindu Mahasabha candidate secured 26.78% votes cast, the Congress candidate who won securing 28.22%.

A peculiar feature of the First General Elections was the contest by a large number of Independent candidates. Although none of them came out successful, a few could divert a large number of votes. In one or two constituencies they carried away as many as 40 to 50% of the votes cast.

In the Second General Elections to the Lok Sabha the Congress Party maintained its lead. The two successful candidates for the Lok Sabha were Congress nominees and their victory over their rivals of the Hindu Mahasabha was by a margin of 18.6 per cent of the valid votes cast the two winners both from the Congress Party securing 59.3 per cent against their rivals, both again Hindu Mahasabha candidates obtaining 40.7 per cent votes. No other political party set up candidate for the Lok Sabha.

For elections to the Vidhan Sabha a larger number of seats were captured by candidates other than those of the Congress Party. But in at least three constituencies, Labhpur, Suri and Rampurhat, the electorate showed preference for the Communist Party of India. The three candidates the Party had set up in these constituencies won respectively with 47.08 per cent, 25.53 per cent and 18.74 per cent of the valid votes polled. In Suri a

double-membered constituency the C.P.I. candidate came second to a P.S.P. candidate who won 30.12 per cent votes, while in Rampurhat another constituency with two seats an Independent candidate was at the top of the polls with 31.20 per cent of votes. The Congress candidates who lost the elections in the three above mentioned constituencies came next to the winning C.P.I. candidates with 45.31 per cent of votes in Labhpur, and 15.29 per cent and 13.72 per cent in Rampurhat. In the Suri constituency where one of the two seats reserved for a Scheduled Tribe candidate was secured by the C.P.I. nominee polling 13.49 per cent of the votes, the Congress candidate for the seat got 10.08 per cent. The Praja Socialist Party set up three candidates, of whom one contesting from Suri won with 30.12 per cent of the votes polled in the constituency. The P.S.P. nominee from the Rajnagar seat reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate lost with 20.84 per cent of the votes. At Nalhati however the P.S.P. candidate had only 1.30 per cent of the constituency's poll.

The Hindu Mahasabha set up five candidates, but they made poor show. Three of them, two at Rampurhat and one at Nalhati failed to secure even as many as 5% of the valid votes cast at the constituencies. At Labhpur the Hindu Mahasabha candidate secured only 7.61 per cent of the votes, the C.P.I. and the Congress candidates obtaining as many as 47.08 and 45.31 per cent respectively. Only in Bolpur constituency the Hindu Mahasabha candidate secured 21.78 per cent votes, the Congress and the Independent candidates polling 54.81 and 23.41 per cent votes respectively.

The Forward Bloc (Marxist) contested the elections from Rajnagar and Nalhati. The candidate from the first named constituency obtained 21.23 per cent of the votes while at the last named constituency its nominee had only 7.57 per cent.

As in the First General Elections votes were diverted by Independents in this election too. But their total impact on the electorate was less than in the first.

In the Third General Elections, 1962, the Birbhum constituency had a single seat in the Lok Sabha and that was reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate. Three Party candidates and an Independent contested the seat which went to Congress, its nominee securing 43.15 per cent of the valid votes. Forward Bloc came next with 24.40 per cent and P.S.P. followed with 18.19 per cent.

The Independent candidate secured 14.26 per cent of the valid votes cast.

In the Vidhan Sabha elections a noticeable feature is that contests were more on party basis than before. Of the 41 candidates who fought for the 10 seats, 13 were Independent, whereas in the First General Elections 24 out of 59 candidates and in the Second General Elections 19 out of 43 candidates were Independent.

Partywise influence on the electorate is indicated as follows:

Congress set up 10 candidates, one each for the 10 constituencies, won at Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Rampurhat and Nalhati. The percentage of valid votes in relation to the total electorate in the above mentioned constituencies was respectively 51, 45.09, 49.76 and 42.48. Their nearest rivals scored as follows: Suri, Socialist Unity Centre 21.12%; Mahammad Bazar, C.P.I. 29.47%; Rampurhat, Forward Bloc 35.79% and Nalhati, P.S.P. 27.95%.

C.P.I. won two out of the three seats for which its nominees contested. At Labhpur its candidates secured 37.73% of the valid votes polled and at Mayureswar 44.35%, while at Mahammad Bazar the C.P.I. candidate who lost to the Congress nominee got 29.47 per cent of the valid votes the Congress candidate having 45.09. At Mayureswar the nearest rival a Congress candidate obtained 39.18 per cent of the valid votes polled in the constituency and at Labhpur the Independent candidate who stood next to the winning C.P.I. nominee got 33.13 per cent.

The R.S.P. candidate who won the Bolpur seat secured 66.36 per cent of the valid votes polled in the constituency, in a straight contest with a Congress candidate. The other seat won by an R.S.P. candidate was Murarai securing 38.10 per cent valid votes, the Congress and the P.S.P candidates obtained 34.62 and 27.27 per cent respectively. The third R.S.P. candidate who was set up at Suri polled less than 3 per cent.

Three Forward Bloc candidates were set up of whom two won, one at Dubrajpur who secured 57.28% of valid votes in a straight fight against a Congress candidate. The second Forward Bloc candidate to win was from Rajnagar where five candidates contested. The Forward Bloc candidate won with 47.33 per cent of valid votes to his credit, his nearest rival the Congress nominee securing 36.39 per cent. The Hindu Mahasabha candidate came third with 9.63 per cent. The remaining votes were shared between two Independent candidates.

The third Forward Bloc candidate set up in this district was at Rampurhat where he lost to the Congress candidate. The Forward Bloc candidate won 35.79 per cent of the valid votes polled in the constituency as against 44.35 per cent polled by the winner.

Other parties contesting elections in this district P.S.P., Hindu Mahasabha and Swatantra failed to carry a mentionable portion of the electorate behind them. Mention has already been made of Hindu Mahasabha's position in Rajnagar. The only other Hindu Mahasabha candidate set up at Nalhati was at the bottom of the polls with only 293 votes or 1.26% of the valid votes polled. P.S.P. candidates too failed to evoke any notable support except at Suri where the party's candidate came third with 19.46 per cent of valid votes in his share of the ballot. The only Swatantra candidate who contested from Suri secured 5.02 per cent of the valid votes polled. In Nalhati a candidate set up by the Samyukta Biplabi Parishad could secure only 5.82 per cent of the valid votes.

In the Fourth General Elections, Congress annexed both the seats in the district. In the Bolpur constituency it was straight fight between a Congress and a C.P.M. candidate the former winning with 52.73 per cent of the valid votes. In the Birbhum constituency which was reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate the Congress nominee won with 36.27 per cent of the valid votes. His nearest rival a Forward Bloc candidate secured 22.31 per cent. The remaining 44 per cent valid votes were shared by three Independent candidates.

In the Vidhan Sabha elections a remarkable feature is the success of as many as four Independent candidates. The twelve seats were won by Congress (six seats), Independents (four seats) and Forward Bloc (two seats). Congress defeated the C.P.M. candidate at Labhpur the respective percentages of valid votes secured being 59.24 and 40.76. In the triangular contest at Suri Congress won with 37.32 per cent the rest of votes being shared by the Independent candidate and a P.S.P. nominee the former securing 36.34 per cent and the latter 26.33. In Mahammad Bazar where too Congress won in a triangular contest with a Bangla Congress and an Independent candidate the winner polling 53.70 per cent. The Bangla Congress candidate obtained 39.89. Congress obtained 50.89 per cent of valid votes in Mayureswar the remainder being shared by C.P.M. (24.63%), C.P.I. (19.28%) and an Independent (5.21%). At Hansan, a constituency reserved for the Scheduled Caste the winning Congress candidate had 41.75%

votes. An Independent candidate his nearest rival secured 32.10 per cent and a Forward Bloc candidate 25.84 per cent.

The Forward Bloc candidate defeated the Congress candidate at Rajnagar winning 46.02 per cent of the valid votes as against 45.30. At Rampurhat the other constituency, where Forward Bloc won, the party gained 35.61 of the valid votes. The other contestants in this constituency were Congress (25.72%), Independent (22.19%) and C.P.M. (16.47%).

The number of Independent candidates set up in this election was 15. Four of them found themselves elected and of the others several who, even if they did not actually win, succeeded in drawing away a large number of votes and affecting the outcome of the elections.

The mid-term elections to the Vidhan Sabha in February 1969 was a contest more or less, between the Congress and the United Front of 12 Parties consisting of the C.P.I., C.P.M., Bangla Congress, Forward Bloc, R.S.P., S.S.P., S.U.C., L.S.S., Gurkha League, R.C.P.I., Workers Party and Forward Bloc Marxist. Of the 4,35,300 valid votes polled 2,33,123 or 53.55 per cent went in favour of the United Front and 1,63,211 or 37.49 per cent of the Congress. The remaining votes, about 9 per cent were shared in negligible proportions by 4 Independent, 2 Jana Sangha, 5 Proutist Bloc, 7 I.N.D.F., 7 Progressive Muslim League, 1 Lok Dal, 3 Jatiya Dal and 2 P.S.P. candidates. At a few constituencies one or two nominees of the above mentioned parties and blocs succeeded in obtaining 10 per cent votes or more. For instance Bangla Jatiya Dal secured 16.40 per cent at Dubrajpur, and 10.50 per cent at Rajnagar; Progressive Muslim League obtained 12.47 per cent at Mayureswar, 18.64 at Hansan. These candidates mostly forfeited their security deposits.

Mid-term Elections 1971

The Ministry formed in 1969 had subsequently to give way on the imposition of the President's rule in 1970.

The mid-term elections to the Vidhan Sabha in 1971 displayed the return of 7 C.P.I.(M), 1 C.P.I., 2 S.U.C., 1 R.C.P.I. and 1 Independent candidates from the district.

The C.P.M. candidates from Nanur, Bolpur, Labhpur, Dubrajpur, Rajnagar (S.C.), Mahammad Bazar and Rampurhat obtained respectively 18,486 votes out of 36,856; 13,088 out of 32,860; 15,536 out of 30,876; 12,539 out of 30,824; 10,443 out of 26,823; 13,457 out of 29,508 and 15,546 out of 30,866 votes.

The C.P.I. candidate from Mayureswar (S.C.) obtained 10,925 votes out of 31,303.

The S.U.C. candidates from Suri and Murarai respectively obtained 12,060 votes out of 34.918 and 16,310 votes out of 30,355.

The R.C.P.I. candidate from Hansan (S.C.) obtained 9,181 votes out of 20.770, while the Independent candidate from Nalhati obtained 10,184 votes out of 25,078 votes.

Fifth General Elections 1972

The State Ministry formed through the mid-term elections in 1971 again gave way on the imposition of the President's rule, and the Fifth General Elections to the Vidhan Sabha was held in 1972. In 1972 elections, 8 Congress, 3 C.P.I. and 1 Independent (L. F. supported) candidates were returned from the district. The Congress candidates from Nanur (S.C.), Dubrajpur, Rajnagar (S.C.), Suri, Mahammad Bazar, Rampurhat, Hansan (S.C.) and Murarai obtained respectively 25,018 votes out of 42,761; 19,975 out of 37,041; 20,392 out of 38,661; 26,579 out of 47,473; 19,532 out of 35,715; 21,151 out of 39,339; 17,077 out of 29,855 and 25,883 out of 39,431 votes. The C.P.I. candidates obtained respectively 17,732 votes out of 36,378; 15,304 out of 30,280; 15,089 out of 29,737 votes. The only Independent candidate (supported by Left Front) obtained 12,932 votes out of 28,047 votes.

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Out of the ten newspapers published in the Birbhum district nine are weekly and one is a fortnightly. The principal daily newspapers of Calcutta like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, the *Dainik Basumati*, the *Ganasakti*, the *Hindusthan Standard*, the *Jugantar*, the *Kalantar* and the *Statesman* and periodicals like the *Desh* and the *Amrita* are in common circulation in the district.

Of the weekly newspapers published in the district the *Birbhum Barta* published from Suri is about 70 years old. O'Malley in his Gazetteer states : "Two Bengali weekly newspapers are printed and published at Suri; one is called the *Birbhum Barta* and the other the *Birbhum Hitaisi*. They deal chiefly with matters of local interest."[1]

Today the *Birbhum Barta* has a circulation of about 1700 copies and is read by the people of Birbhum at large. It deals with matters of local interest and is conservative in its editorial policy.

[1] L.S.S.O'Malley — op. cit. p. 104.

Another weekly published from Suri, is the *Seva*, which has an approximate circulation of a thousand and is read in the rural areas of the district. The *Birbhum Bani*, published from Suri has circulation in Suri and Labhpur towns. Started in 1917, the paper has now become irregular in its publication.

The other weeklies published from Suri are: the *Mayurakshi*, the *Dhusarmati* and the *Chandrabhaga*. The *Dhusarmati* a weekly started in 1960 had a circulation in the district of about 1700 copies in 1969. It is read by the intelligentsia as well as shop-keepers, traders and agriculturists.

The *Mayurakshi Patrika* commenced publication in 1954 and has a circulation of about 1200 copies. It carries news items of interest to rural people at large. Its views are independent and not aligned to that of any political party or group. Another such independent paper, the *Chandrabhaga* has a circulation of about 110 and commands readership both in urban and rural areas.

Of the weekly newspapers published from places other than Suri the *Agnisikha* of Rampurhat which was started in November 1968 claims a circulation of about 1500. From this town are published two other weeklies the *Birbhum Dak* and the *Birbhum*. The former, which was started in 1948, devotes itself to the propagation of the ideals of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. It circulates in Rampurhat and Nalhati. The *Birbhum* was started in January 1968. The circulation of both these papers is still inconsiderable.

The only fortnightly published in this district, the *Dehasousthav* of Bolpur, circulates in the rural areas of Bolpur, Ilambazar and Nanur police stations. Among other things, it gives publicity to the activities of the Prafulla Sen Krishti Parishad which has been founded for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes boys.

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

The activities of Christian Missionaries loom large in the history of voluntary social service organisations in the 19th and the early 20th Century. O'Malley wrote in 1910 : "The Oldest Christian Mission at work in Birbhum is The Baptist Mission, of which a branch was established here nearly a century ago by the Serampore Mission. One of the earliest missionaries was Mr. James Williamson, who arrived in 1821.... He was sent by Drs. Carey and Marshman from Serampore to Birbhum where he acted as Assistant Surgeon at the Suri Jail in addition to his other duties. The Baptist Mission has its headquarters at Suri, and maintains a girls' school there, which was opened 40 years ago, besides several village schools. The only other mission

at work in the district is the Methodist Episcopal Mission, which started work at Bolpur a few years ago."[1]

About other voluntary service organisations in the early years of the present century O'Malley further writes: "At Suri there is a Muhammedan association known as the Anjuman Marukare Islamia, the object of which is the social and educational advancement of the Muhammedan community. At Bhubandanga near Bolpur there is a Brahmo Samaj building known as the Santiniketan which is associated with the great Brahmo leader Debendranath Tagore; in connection with this a Brahmo School is maintained. In the village Fatehpur in the Rampurhat Subdivision there is a semiliterary society called the Bandhab Samiti, the members of which have formed a co-operative credit society. There are also some Hari Sabhas and Brahmo Samajes dealing with religious matters, among which the Brahmo Samaj of Suri and Nalhati may be mentioned."[2]

Palli Samgathana Vibhaga, Sriniketan

The activities of Christian Missionaries have waned. The little school near Bolpur has flowered into a University, an account of which is given elsewhere in this volume. Associated with it is the Palli-Samgathana Vibhaga, originally known as the Institute of Rural Reconstraction which was founded at Sriniketan in 1922 by Rabindranath Tagore with the active help of Leonard K. Elmhirst.

The ideal of the Institute in the words of the poet himself is "to bring back life in its completeness into the villages making the rural folk self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic condition."[3]

Ever since the poet started rural reconstruction work at Shilaidah, a village in North Bengal and a part of his ancestral property, he had been feeling the urge of village uplift "from within". In 1906 he sent his eldest son Rathindranath and another youngman Santosh Majumdar (son of an old friend) to the U.S.A. to study agriculture and animal husbandry. A few years after the return of his son from the U.S.A., Rabindranath bought the property at Surul near Bolpur, which constitutes the site of the present Rural Reconstruction Department. It is here that the poet proposed to continue the work which he began in Shilaidah.

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1 L.S.S. O'Malley — op. cit. pp. 31-32.
2 op. cit p. 39.
3 Quoted in booklet on Visva-Bharati Palli Samgathana Vibhaga by Visva-Bharati 1968, p. 1.

After a slow and hesitant start the work was finally taken up in earnest in the early twenties. Substantial help came from an English friend Leonard K. Elmhirst, who met Rabindranath in the U.S.A. in 1920, when the poet unfolded to him his own plan for bringing back "life in its completeness" to rural India. Elmhirst came to India next year and joined the Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan in February 1922 as its first Director.

The aims and objects of the Institute as formulated then are:

1. To win the friendship and affection of villagers and cultivators by taking a real interest in all that concerns their life and welfare and by making a lively effort to assist them in solving their most pressing problems.

2. To take the problems of the village and the field to the classroom for study and discussion and to the experimental farm for solution.

3. To carry the knowledge and experience gained in the classroom and the experimental farm to the villagers, in an endeavour to improve their sanitation and health, to develop the resources and credit to help them to sell their produce and buy their requirements to the best advantage; to teach them better methods of growing crops, vegetables and to keeping livestock; to encourage them to learn and practise arts and crafts; and to bring home to them the benefits of associated life, mutual aid and common endeavour.

During nearly half a century of its functioning, the programme of the work of the Institute has undergone many changes, some of them far-reaching in character.

According to its present programme, the activities of the Palli Samgathana Vibhaga fall into two broad categories, viz. (a) Education and Training and (b) Extension work and similar activities.

In the field of education there are at present four organisations each representing one particular aspect of the Vibhaga's activities, viz.

(i) Siksha-Satra, an experimental School established in 1924, to give shape to Rabindranath's ideas about rural education.

The poet had three things especially in view when he started Siksha-Satra. First he wanted that the students should be given full opportunity to enter into intimate relationship with the natural and social enviornment. It was because of this that Siksha-Satra,

which was at first started in Santiniketan, was later shifted to Sriniketan where it could maintain a closer contact with rural life. Secondly, he wanted the pupils to undertake a greater measure of responsibility in meeting the requirements of their individual and community life. Thirdly, the poet wanted the greater emphasis to be laid on learning through creative activities such as crafts, gardening etc. with which all formal knowledge subjects were to be correlated as far as possible.

Siksha-Satra is now functioning as a Higher Secondary School of the multipurpose type, with the following streams of institutions (a) Humanities, (b) Science, (c) Technical, (d) Wood-craft and (e) Home-Science (for girls).

Crafts and other co-curricular activities find a special place in the training programme of students from Class II to Class VIII.

(ii) Siksha-Charcha, established in 1937 as an Institute for the training of rural teachers, is now functioning as a Junior Basic Teachers' Training College under a scheme of the Government of West Bengal.

(iii) Loka Siksha-Samsad, was established in 1937 with the object of encouraging self-study at home among people who for some reason or other did not have any opportunity of formal education in Schools and Colleges. It is an examining body with centres spread all over West Bengal and even outside the State. The courses of study range from the primary to the degree stage, the latter being equivalent to the honours degree courses of Indian Universities in Bengali and History.

(iv) Silpa-Sadana : Established in the early twenties, Silpa-Bhavana or "The Hall of Industries" was originally located at Santiniketan. It was later transferred to Sriniketan to become one of the constituent bodies of the Institute of Rural Reconstruction. After the Visva-Bharati was chartered as a Central University in 1951, Silpa-Bhavana was renamed Silpa-Sadana. It has since then been functioning in two sections, one devoted the training and the other to the work of extension and rehabilitation.

Extension work in the villages, which has always formed an important part of the activities of Sriniketan had to undergo considerable change since the establishment of a Development Block by the Government in 1955 covering the Sriniketan area. Since then emphasis has been more on the organisational aspect of extension programme than on actual developmental work in the villages.

One of the successful experiments conducted by Sriniketan in the field of health extension work has been the organisation of co-operative health societies in villages. Under this scheme villagers may get medical relief by enrolling themselves as members of a co-operative health society on payment of an annual subscription in cash or in kind. At present five such health societies are functioning in the area of operation of Sriniketan. The Palli-Samgathana Vibhaga also maintains a maternity and child-welfare centre (sponsored by the Government of West Bengal) for the benefit of the village people. The Medical Section of Sriniketan has also adopted a programme of rendering free medical service to the tribal people living in the area covered by the territorial jurisdiction of the University. It may be mentioned that before World War II, Sriniketan did considerable work in the field of anti-malaria work. The leprosy control work started by Sriniketan in 1950 was later taken up by the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi.

The Cottage Industry Extension and Rehabilitation Section runs two workshops at Sriniketan, one in weaving and the other in wood-work. The section also maintains a number of production centres in weaving in different villages as well as two sales emporia.

The library services include the *Chalantika* or circulating library with 15 village libraries under its supervision.

The Palli-Samgathana Vibhaga runs 31 adult education centres in the villages - each centre consisting of a literary wing and a social education wing.

The Palli-Samgathana Vibhaga renders help and guidance for the organisation of youth clubs in the rural areas. Besides, the Vibhaga also carries on a number of other activities in the villages such as the organisation of training camps and seminars for rural workers, audiovisual shows, folk-recreational work, organisation and supervision of cooperatives, *dharma golas* (cooperative grain stores) and Mahila Samities.

Sree Sree Ramakrishna Asrama, Suri

Of the Indian missionary societies carrying on voluntary social service in the district mention may be made of Sree Sree Ramakrishna Asrama, Suri, a society registered in 1945 and working through a net-work of organisations. The institutions run by the mission include a college in Sainthia, 2 higher secondary schools and several lower-grade schools, music schools and student homes. It also runs a number of libraries at various places in the district as well a 12-bed hospital at Dubrajpur and charitable

dispensaries at Suri, Batikar, Narsingpur (P.S. Mahammad Bazar) Rampurhat and Jayadeva-Kendubilwa.

The head office of the society was originally located at Suri, but has since been shifted to Baranagore, Calcutta. The nucleus of the Asrama was formed in 1939 through the efforts of some devotees of Sree Ramakrishna Paramhansa. The founder-Preceptor of the Asrama Swami Satyananda gathered round him a group of workers who have been serving the Asrama and, through it, the people of the State.

Vivekananda Pathagar and Ramaranjan Town Hall

A large number of clubs, libraries and social service organisations are spread over the district, each limited in its impact to the town or village in which it is located. Few can claim to have their names heard beyond the district, but many are carrying on healthy social activities among the constituents. The first among these to be mentioned is the Vivekananda Granthagar and Rama Ranjan Town Hall, Suri. Probably the oldest institution of its kind it was established in A.D. 1900 through the good offices of Mr. A. Ahmed, the then Collector of Birbhum, and financial assistance from Shri Rama Ranjan Chakravarti, Maharaja of Hetampur supplemented by donations from the public. Originally known as the Jubilee Library and Rama Ranjan Town Hall its name was changed to what it is to-day in 1962, the year of Swami Vivakananda's birth centenary. The library contains more than 15,000 books including some rare collections such as all the issues of Bankim Chandra's *Bangadarśan* and lends them to its members. Attached to the library are two reading rooms, the Gopinath Pathabhawan and the Rabindra Pathabhawan. Three other associated institutions are housed in the same building. They are the Rabindra Pathagar, Rabindra Smriti Samiti, the Birbhum Kishore Pathagar and the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi study circle. Meetings are organised from time to time in the library where matters of library, social and cultural interest are discussed. The library walls are decorated with the portraits of leading personalities of the country.

The Lees Club, Suri which was established in 1916, was named after the then Commissioner of the Burdwan Division. The land and the main club building were donated by Raja Sada Niranjan Chakravarti of Hetampur. One of the club's founder-members Sri Nirmal Shib Banerji of Labhpur constructed a theatrical stage for the club in 1919. It is known as the Gurusaday Stage. The auditorium known as the Dinanath Das Memorial Hall after the father of late Debendranath Das of Khujutipara who bore the

charge of its construction and handed it over to the club in 1937. The Hall is now used as a cinema hall and according to the wishes of the donor an amount equivalent to 20% of the rent of the Hall is distributed among the poor students of the district. The club concentrates on recreational activities mainly, conducts Bridge and Tennis tournaments, organises cultural performances and encourages such activities of other institutions by allowing them to use the hall and the stage. Labhpur Atul Shib Club is another institution with a fairly long tradition. Its beginning may be traced back to 1902 when a dramatic society was formed and a stage set up for theatrical performances. Later, a library was added and in 1921 the Atul Shib club was formally inaugurated. The land was donated by the estate of Jadavlal Banerjee and the club building was constructed out of funds raised by public subscription. It was named after Atul Shib, son of Jadavlal Banerjee. As the activities of the club expanded it organised a sports section and social welfare section, which drew its inspiration from the social service union organised in 1918 by the celebrated writer Tarasankar Banerjee. Shri Banerjee took a leading part in the literary activities of the club and was associated with a journal "Purnima" which was run for sometime by the club. Periodical literary meetings are organised by the club. It may be mentioned here that this club has had among its active members a number of men, who made contribution to Bengali literature, notably in the field of drama and fiction. Mention may be made of Nirmal Shib Banerjee, Nityagopal Mukherjee, Kalikinkar Mukherjee, Nityanarayan Banerjee and, last but not least Tarasankar Banerjee.

Social Welfare organisations in rural areas got a fillip with the advent of the independence of India. A large number of rural libraries and social service bodies have sprung up since 1947 and are carrying on work to improve the sanitation, health and education of the community. Some are taking up even work like tank reclamation, organisation of village protection volunteers, road repair etc. In this they receive help from Government agencies which have been set up to aid them in their endeavours. Among the organisations in the rural areas mention may be made of : Bhurkuna Palli Mangal Samity, Kazipara Bandhab Samity, Khayrasol Milan Sangha, Bagtore Upendranath Kristi Parishad, Ghurisha Nirmal Milan Sangha, Durmut Palli Unnayan Sangha, Dhananjaybati Unnayan Sangha, Bipratikuri Sarbodaya Samity, Jaunbazar Sabuj Samity, Gohalipata Udayan Rural Library, Fengram Milan Mandir, Debagram Juba Sangha, Perua Juba

Sangha, Debipur Abedananda Juba Sangha, Jamura Dhrubabati Palli Unnayan Samity, Nahina Sarbajanin Club and Library, Rajnagar Public Library, Sainthia Town Hall, Indus Tarun Samity, Nakraconda Sanskritic Samity, Milapur Anandamoyee Club, Kirnahar Rabindra Smriti Samity, Gangapur Sabuj Samsad, Nagari Bani Mandir, Baliharpur Sabuj Sangha, Hatia Ananda Sangsad, Hattala Palli Unnayan Samity and Danyapara Palli Unnayan Samity.

ADVANCEMENT OF BACKWARD CLASSES AND TRIBES

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

According to 1961 Census the Scheduled Caste population inhabiting the district of Birbhum comprises 29.14 per cent of its total population. This percentage is higher than the State average. In the rural sector of the district 29.71 per cent of its people are members of the Scheduled Castes as against the State rural average of 23.6 per cent. In the urban sector the proportion of Scheduled Caste population in the district is higher than that in the State.

The district of Birbhum has 1.71 lakhs of persons returned in Census enumeration of 1961 as members of one of eleven Scheduled Tribes. The Scheduled Tribes of this district make only a small fraction of the total population amounting to only 7.39 per cent of the total inhabitants of Birbhum. The majority of the tribal workers are engaged in the agricultural sector. Nearly 87 per cent of the total tribal workers are so engaged.

Welfare Schemes

The Government's schemes for welfare of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, who generally form the backward classes include construction of Primary Schools, buildings, hostels, sinking of tube-wells and masonry wells, execution of minor irrigation projects, improvement of village roads and culverts, establishment of co-operative grain godowns, establishment of co-operative societies with grain and cash credit and consumer goods facilities, producing materials for house-buildings, grants for purchase of housing sites, grants for purchase of bullocks, grants to clubs and libraries, financial assistance for the reclamation of waste land, monetary assistance to keepers of rams, goats and boars, and also financial assistance to Scheduled Tribe artisans. All these schemes have been implemented in the areas of the district where the backward classes may derive benefit out of them. Three schemes for construction of primary schools, buildings, hostels etc., one for the Scheduled Castes and two for the Scheduled Tribes were executed in 1962-63. Under the schemes for the welfare of Scheduled Castes rupees 5,000/- were spent on building a primary school at Rajgram in P.S. Murarai, while two primary school buildings one at Laghata in Labhpur P.S. and the other at Sulunga in Rampur-

hat P.S. were constructed at an expenditure of Rs. 5,292. In the same year extension of the buildings of the Langulia Junior High School in P.S. Suri was made and a sum of Rs. 10,000/- was spent. In 1964-65 a new hostel attached to Girgore Santal Junior High School in P.S. Mahammad Bazar was constructed and an expenditure of Rs. 18,400 made. In 1965-66 a sum of Rs. 20,000 was spent on the construction of a new hostel for the Scheduled Caste students attached to Sainthia Sashi Bhusan Girls' High School. Rs. 30,900 was spent on two projects for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes: (1) the extension of the existing hostel attached to Naguni High School, P.S. Suri and (2) construction of a new hostel attached to Lokepara High School, P.S. Mayureswar. On water supply schemes, between 1961-62 and 1965-66 as much as Rs. 2,57,054 was spent on the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Rs. 1,69,352 on that of Scheduled Tribes and during this period 329 masonry wells and 25 tube-wells were executed giving benefit to about 19,300 families of backward classes.

In 1966-67 Rs. 10,000 was spent for the construction of 10 masonry wells and tube-wells and Rs. 20,000 was spent in the following year on another 9 masonry wells for the welfare of Scheduled Castes, while 12 masonry wells and tube-wells were constructed in 1966-67 and 7 masonry wells in the following year the amount spent being Rs. 13,723 and 15,000 respectively. Three minor irrigation schemes one in Rajnagar P.S. and two in Khayrasol were executed for the welfare of Scheduled Castes in 1966-67 and 1967-68, while 7 such schemes were executed during the same period for welfare of Scheduled Tribes in P.Ss. Suri, Khayrasol, Mahammad Bazar, Rajnagar and Sainthia.

In another scheme of welfare of tribal people financial aid was given for the construction of an Asrama hostel, Kalimohon Senior Basic School, at Albandha in P.S. Bolpur in 1966-67. In 1967-68 the Asrama hostel was given Rs. 8,372 for its maintenance benefiting 16 students of the Scheduled Tribes.

For the welfare of Scheduled Caste people Rs. 25,000 was spent on the construction of hostel buildings for Scheduled Caste students of a girls' school in 1966-67.

During the two years 1966-68 a total of 42 Scheduled Caste families and 24 Scheduled Tribe families were given assistances for house-building either in the shape of grants for the purchase of housing materials or purchase of house site.

Agricultural subsidy in the shape of grants for the purchase of bullocks, land improvement, including reclamation of waste land in

Turbua Mouja, P.S. Rampurhat, for cultivation, benefited 54 families of Scheduled Tribes and 48 Scheduled Caste families. A total sum of Rs. 11,250 was spent on the account in the 1966-67 and 1967-68. Under the welfare schemes for the Scheduled Tribes 10 grain golas were opened in the Second and 19 in the Third Five-year Plan periods. In 1966-67 three grain golas were opened at Gurkata, Karaibad and Baramasia, all of them in the Rajnagar P.S. the amount spent being Rs. 30,750.

Under the special schemes for tribal Block in Rampurhat P.S. in 1967-68, a 4-mile long road from Sarjantola to Sabunga and Salbadra to Thakurpukur was improved at an expenditure of Rs. 20,000. A 2-feet span culvert was constructed at Aturia at a cost of Rs. 1,315/- and at Senbanda A.P. Masara a 5′ span culvert was constructed at a cost of Rs. 2,285. Four masonry wells were constructed at Jamkandar, Buritola, Gamarpahari and Bamni in the same police station.

Special schemes for the tribal Block in Mahammad Bazar P.S. were taken up. During 1966-67 and 1967-68, 7 masonry wells were constructed at Baramasia, Palasboni, Roypur A.P. Bharttata, Mangerpara, Gogha A.P. and Ganpur.

Five minor irrigation schemes were executed during these two years, viz. Palasboni, Pathpukur Hir Bandh A.P. Ganpur, Agoria Hir Bandh A.P. Bharkata, Dwarpahari Hir Bandh, Buritola Hir Bandh and Girijore Hir Bandh A.P. Bharkata. Under the same period scheme improvement of 2 miles of village road to Kadar from Suri-Rampurhat-Dharampur pucca road via Palasboni to Hirchukpara tribal village and 2 miles of Huchukpara Gethia village road A.P. Bharkata was executed during 1966-68. Five culverts were also constructed on village roads in this P.S. in 1967-68. One grain gola was established with grain and cash consumers good facilities at village — Ushaka — A.P. Bharkata in 1966-68. 40 families in 7 villages were benefited from the grant of Rs. 20,000 for house-building under the special scheme. During this period buildings for the Huchukpara Primary School were constructed at an expense of Rs. 15,000.

Source: Tribal Welfare Department.

CHAPTER XVI

PLACES OF INTEREST

Ahmadpur — A railway junction on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway. A branch narrow gauge line connects it with Katwa in the Burdwan district. It is within the Sainthia police station of the Sadar subdivision. A regular bus service connects it with Suri, the district headquarters, situated about 21 km. away. It is the headquarters station of the Sainthia Community Development Block, is an important trading centre and has a few rice mills, some of which manufacture bran oil. The National Sugar Mill is also located here. Gur-making and handloom-weaving are also other important industries of the place. The area is irrigated by the Mayurakshi Project.

Extending over an area of 398.19 acres, this one-time village (J.L. No. 154) has all the look of an urban area with a population of 3,279 according to the Census of 1961. It has many civic amenities like school, health centre, telephone exchange, electricity, post office and two branches of Banks.

Amdahara — A small village (J.L. No. 89) with a population of 469 in 1961 in the Sadar subdivision, is situated 6 miles away to the north-east of Bolpur. It has a shrine of the goddess Kankali.

Angera — A small village (J.L. No. 94) in Nanur police station, it is 12 miles east of Bolpur railway station. It is also situated 8 miles direct south of Kirnahar railway station on Ahmadpur-Katwa Narrow Gauge line. Legend says that the hermitage of Rishi Angera was located here. There is a cold water spring named Bhurbhure Kunda at this place, which is said to be very deep.

Bakreshwar — A village (J.L. No. 42) or rather a city of temples in Dubrajpur police station, it is about 12 miles south-west of Suri and 6 miles north-west of Dubrajpur railway station on the Andal-Sainthia branch of the Eastern Railway. It is a famous Saivite pilgrim centre, hallowed by the memory of Aghoribaba, a *tāntrik* sage. It is also a *Śākta piṭhasthān*. The place is visited by ordinary tourists, tantricists, *bauls* and others. Apart from the temple of Siva, there is a temple of Mahishamardini here, the latter being the *Śakti* of the former.

It has a number of sulphurous hot springs, besides a few cold springs. They all discharge into a rivulet which joins a small stream called the Pāpaharā river flowing near by. The hot springs are considered to be the manifestations of divine power and barren women or women suffering from miscarriage frequent them. To derive special benefit such women take a dip under a submerged arch in one of the reservoirs. A large number of pilgrims visit the place on the Sivaratri day every year when a big fair is held which continues for seven or eight days.

There are numerous legends regarding the origin of the temples and springs. It is said that once the renowned sages Subrita and Lomas were invited to the marriage ceremony of Lakshmi. At the reception centre, however, Lomas was welcomed first. At this Subrita became angry and left the place. His anger was so much that his limbs assumed ungraceful curves in eight places and he came to be known as Astabakra. Thus disfigured, he arrived at Benares to worship Siva. He was told that his prayers could only be fulfilled if he offered them at an undefined spot named Gupta-Kasi (the hidden Benares) in the distant kingdom of Gauḍa. Astabakra then came to Bakreśwar and worshipped Siva for ten thousand years. The god was then pleased and declared that whoever worshipped Astabakra first and Siva afterwards would get an endless stores of blessings. Viswakarma was directed to erect a temple on the eastern bank of the river Bakreshwar which still exists. But the one seen is of modern architecture.

There are eight hot springs of varying temperature, and the hottest one is named Agni Kunda. The story goes that Siva Hatakakhya dwells in Hades (Pātāl) and bears on his head the lofty mountain Sumeru, down whose side goes the meandering course of the Bhagirathi. Under the influence of Siva's divine powers (*tejas*) its waters are raised to boiling point and force their way to the earth's surface. Legend also says that Prahlad, a worshipper of Krishna, had to come to Bakreshwar on an expiatory pilgrimage for abetment in the murder of his father Hiranyakasipu by Krishna. Prahlad worshipped Siva and bathed in this spring and thus obtained salvation.

About Brahma Kunda it is said that the god Brahma looked upon his daughter with lustful eyes and his sin came to the knowledge of Siva. Brahma was then asked to do penance for his sin. He then went on a pilgrimage to Bakreshwar, bathed in the stream, adored Siva and was relieved of his sin.

Setganga is said to be named after a king named Set of Mangalkot in Burdwan district, who was a fervent worshipper of Siva at the shrine here. Siva was very much pleased at his prayers and offered him a boon. He simply asked that the spring be named after him, and his prayer was granted.

Of Saubhagya Kunda it is said that Gauri, the daughter of Himalaya came to Bakreśwar, bathed in this stream and adored Siva, for whom she nurtured a deep love. The god was pleased and subsequently fulfilled her desires.

Of Surya Kunda it is said that once the sage Narada in course of his travels, arrived at the foot of Mount Vindhya singing the praises of the rival hill of Sumeru. Vindhya became angry and raised his crest so high as to obstruct the rays of the sun. The distressed Surya (sun) then made a pilgrimage to this place, and worshipped Siva for restoration of his light. Under pressure from Siva, Vindhya was forced to subside to his former height.

As to Jiban Kunda it is said that in old days there lived an aged and pious couple named Sarva Charumati. Having no kith or kin they retired to a forest worshipping god there. But one day a tiger appeared and devoured Sarva partially. The poor wife then requested Siva to restore her husband to life and was directed to collect and carry the bones of the dead husband to Bakreshwar and then throw them into this spring. After she did so her husband returned to life. Mothers, whose children die young, still bathe in this spring in the hope of lengthening the lives of their children.

Of Bhairab Kunda it is said that Brahma one day asserted his equality with Siva on grounds that both of them had equal number (five) of heads. Siva became angry and tore off one of his matted locks from which a deity Batuka Bhairaba emerged. Siva directed him to cut off Brahma's foremost head with his finger. When this was done the severed head clung tightly to Batuka Bhairaba's fingers, and pilgrimage to different places could not separate it. The unhappy Batuka Bhairava then arrived at Kasi and began to pray. His prayer was partly granted as the head dropped off but an unhealing wound stayed on his finger. He then came to Bakreshwar and took bath in the spring which is named after him. He also put his finger in the waters of Pāpa Harā (sin-destroyer), i.e. in that part of the river Bakreshwar which lies eastward of the spring.

About Khar Kunda, the smallest spring here, it is said that in Satya Yuga the ocean was drunk up by Maharshi Agastya. The ocean, however, got back its waters only after a long course of bathing and ablutions to Siva on the banks of this spring.

Bhadiswar — A village (J.L. No. 103) in Murarai police station adjacent to the Murarai Railway Station on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway. It has an area of 362.09 acres with a population of 2,847 persons (in 1961). It is said that there was a king named Bhadreswar or Bhadrasen in the village, after whom the name is derived. Two brick-built mounds (at *Sashṭhitalā*), locally said to be the ruins of the palace and temple of the king, are protected by Government. No historical reference to the king has been traced so far. Two stone images of *Haragauri* and *Manasā* were discovered at a place to the extreme south of the village. The broken *Haragauri* image, 3 feet high, is kept in a brick-built temple by the side of the main road. The *Manasā* image is small. A broken and undeciphered stone-inscription was also discovered from the village, and it is fixed up on a wall of the *Haragauri* temple. Local belief says that the *Haragauri* image was broken by Kālāpāhār. It also says that before Maratha (*bargi*) inroads, the village was very prosperous. There was a battle at Birksheti (in Bihar) between king Bhadreswar (or Bhadrasen) and Murshidkuli Khan, after which the king fled away from the village. Another legend says, Sena kings (of Birnagar) used to take rest in the village while they were out of the capital for taking a bath in the Ganges or for war.

Bhadrapur — A village (J.L. No. 90) in Nalhati police station which can be reached from Rampurhat or Nalhati by bus. The nearest railway station, Lohapur, is four miles away on the Nalhati-Azimganj branch line of the Eastern Railway. The dilapidated house of Maharaja Nandakumar stands here. It has an imposing entrance and an old Siva temple within. There are two large tanks near by called Gurusagar and Ranisagar, named after Nandakumar's Guru and Rani. It is said that Nandakumar had them excavated.

There is a sericulture institute on the way leading to Akalipur, a village about two kilometres away. Akalipur stands on the river Brahmani and has the shrine of goddess Kali, installed and worshipped by Nandakumar. The deity constructed of black basalt has two hands in *barābhaya mudrā*. It is said that the temple crumbled during its construction. The deity is worshipped

daily. There is a *siddhāsana* (*Panchamundi*) towards the south of the temple, and it seems that the place was a seat of meditation for *Tāntriks* and *Śāktas* of old times.

Bhandirban — A village (J.L. No. 202) in Suri police station, it is situated six miles north-west of Suri and on the right bank of the river Mayurakshi. It has a big temple dedicated to Bhandiswar Mahadeva or Siva and another dedicated to Gopala or Krishna. The former, a tall brick *rekha deul* having no decoration except floral plaster-work above the entrance, is said to have been erected by Lala Ramnath (Ramnath Bhaduri), Diwan of Muhammad-ul-Zaman-Asad-Uzzaman-khan, the king of Birbhum towards the end of the 18th century. A stone-plate on top of the temple describes its origin in Sanskrit. As to the image of Gopala the legend says that in course of his wanderings a hermit named Dhruba Goswami came to this place at the end of the 15th century. He had twelve images of Gopala with him, and when after two days he was about to leave the place he could not move an image of Gopala which got stuck there. The temple on top of it was later erected by Ramnath Bhaduri. Fairs and festivals on the eve of Goshthashtami are celebrated every year there in the Bengali month of Kartik.

Bhimgarh — A village (J.L. No. 139) in Khayrasol police station it is situated near Kasta railway station on the Andal-Sainthia branch of the Eastern Railway. It is six miles south-west of Dubrajpur, close to the bank of the river Ajay. There was an old fort with two ramparts here, but the relic of the fort now forms low mounds only. Legend says that the five Pandavas stayed here for some time during their exile, and that some hollows near by — possibly, remains of old tanks — were caused by daily pourings of water from boiled rice, surplus *ghi* and sugarcane juice taken by them. A tank near by is called Sonachāl dighi, which, it is said, yielded gold as the Pandavas used to wash rice there. The interior of the fort is now cultivated, and previously the cultivators came across *sal* posts at the time of ploughing the field there.

On the south bank of the river Ajay, opposite to the fort, there are a number of small and undecorated temples, in which, it is said, five *liṅgams* were established by the five Pandavas. The place is called Pandaveshwar after the Pandavas. The village of Pandaveshwar lies just on the south bank of the river Ajay and it has a railway station on the Andal-Sainthia line.

Bhima is again said to have set up another *liṅgam* on the other side of the river near the western portion of the old fort which is now called Bhimeshwar. The small temple of Bhimeshwar was constructed in 1271-2 B.S. There is a tank with *pucca ghāt* attached to the west of the temple. There are also a well, a *nātmandir*, a *chandimandap* and images of Manasa and Kali near by. There are also temples of Raghunath and Siva close by.

It is said that the queen of a Raja of Rajnagar, the capital of Birbhum in old days, for some time lived in a fort at Krishnapur, a neighbouring village.

Birchandrapur — A village (J.L. No. 164) also known as Ekchakra or Ekchaka, in Mayureswar police station, it is situated eight miles east of Mallarpur railway station of the Eastern Railway, and can be reached by bus and then on foot for a mile along a *kutcha* road. Legend says that the Pandava brothers lived here during their long exile and it is considered to be a pilgrim centre. Two large fairs are held here every year — one, the Rasjatra festival held during the Bengali month of Kartik and the other, the Dol Jatra festival held during the Bengali month of Falgun. There is an image of Banka Raj or Banka Rai in the village, which is said to have suffered damage in the hands of Kālāpāhār, the iconoclast. There is a big temple of Banka Rai, who was worshipped by Nityananda, an associate of Sri Chaitanya.

Garbhabas, a neighbouring village, is famous as the birthplace of Nityananda. It is a pilgrim centre of the Vaishnavites and a fair of seven days' duration takes place here in the Bengali month of Kartik on the eve of Goshthashtami in honour of Nityananda. Pilgrims visit Bishwaruptala, Prasutitala, Sri Mandir, Jamuna, Nityamandir, etc., which are associated with the activities of Nityananda. There is a pond near by through which, it is said, Nityananda disappeared. At Pandavtala near by, the pilgrims are shown round a dilapidated house, which is said to be the house of the potter where the Pandavas took shelter during exile.

Bhadrapur, a village close by, is said to have been named after Birbhadra, son of Nityananda.

Birsinghpur — A village also called Birpur and named after Bir Singh, a Hindu Raja of Birbhum, in Suri police station, it is situated about six miles north-west of Suri and half a mile away from Bhandirban. Once flourishing, it is now an impoverished village. The place can be reached first by bus up to Hukmapur

on Suri-Amjore road from Suri and then on foot for a few miles along a *kutcha* road. Once it was one of the capitals of the Bir Rajas. There is a temple of Kali with a stone image and a tank called Kalidaha in this village. It is said that Kali was the family deity of the Bir Rajas of Nagar and she resided in a tank called Kalidaha at Nagar. People there at times saw the hands and head of Kali appear above the water of the tank. After Nagar was captured by Muhammadans, one of them washed a knife besmeared with cow's blood. The goddess, on finding the waters of the tank thus polluted, left the tank, the northern side of which fell down and the water gushed out till it reached the river Khushkarni. The image of Kali which floated down the stream was later discovered at Birsinghpur and placed in the temple for worship.

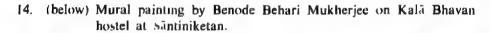
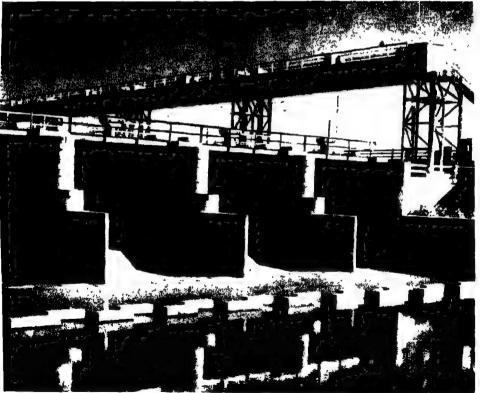
Bolpur—A municipal town in the police station of the same name, comprising an area of 5.1 sq. miles, it has a railway station on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway. It has nine municipal wards including mouzas Makrampur (J.L. No. 97) and Kalikapur. According to the 1961 Census, there were 23,355 persons living here. It has all the usual offices, schools, colleges and hospitals; and several bus-routes emanate from or touch this township. Its importance lies as a trade-centre of rice and as the gateway of Santiniketan (Visva-Bharati).

There are a number of rice-mills in this town. Formerly, it was also a centre for exporting raw hide and *hukka*. Cotton clothes were also made.

As to the origin of the name the legend has been stated in the entry on 'Supur'.

As to its history it was a small village in 1851-52 in pargana Shoopoor. A major road then passed by the village which led from 'Bancoorah to Catwa'. Another road leading from "Burdwan to Soory" also passed by it. The road to Berhampore branched off towards the north-east from here. With the establishment of the Munsif's court here in 1871, the police station and the sub-registry office in 1876 shifted respectively from Amdahara, Kasba and Surul, Bolpur began to prosper. The establishment of 'Bandhgora' school (renamed Bolpur High School) in 1878 and the activities of the Methodist Episcopal Church Missionaries added to the growth of Bolpur. With the opening of the railway line in 1859-60 the place was already gaining importance. People from different villages along the river Ajay began to flock

13. (top) Mural painting on *Naṭīr Pūjā* by Nandalal Bose on China Bhavan at Śāntiniketan.

14. (below) Mural painting by Benode Behari Mukherjee on Kalā Bhavan hostel at Śāntiniketan.

15. (top) Mural painting by Benode Behari Mukherjee on Hindi Bhavan, Śāntiniketan.

16. (below) Tilpārā barrage

this township and it began to grow. And the last, but not the least, impetus for its growth it derived from the establishment of Santiniketan Brahmacharyashram drawing visitors from within and without the country.

A large number of hotels have been established here to cater to the needs of visitors. Besides, there are a tourist lodge, a youth hostel and several inspection bungalows.

Dubrajpur — A small township within the police station of the same name and having a railway station on the Andal-Sainthia branch of the Eastern Railway, it is 14 miles away to the south-west of Suri. It has a Munsif's court, an N.E.S. Block office, a police station and all other usual offices, hospital, college, schools etc. The chief industries here are the manufacture of brass and bell-metal articles and ironwork.

It was formerly within the zemindari of the Raja Bahadur of Hetampur. It has a number of good tanks surrounded by tall palm trees. There are also some Siva temples here of which Akshay Dasi's temple has some nice carvings. Sivalaya, a group of five shrines in Mahatopara is also worth mentioning for fine craftsmanship, their bases and platform are made of porous sand. There are also a number of granitic rocks here and in the neighbouring areas. These rocks are masses of granite and gneiss protruding through the soil and sprawling over about a square mile of area. The granite is grey, made of glassy quartz, pink and grey felspar and black mica. In the centre of the mass a large block of granite is seen united with a mass of gneiss. The gneiss is made of the same materials as the granite, and sticks to it at an angle of 45°. The two masses are locally called 'Māmā-bhāgne pāhār'. The immediate junction of the two rocks cannot easily be seen, but it seems the two are connected at a place where the width is six inches. On one side of the doubtful junction the granite is distinct, and on the other the gneiss with its perfect stratification. From the top of the rock, about 60 feet high, the Parasnath hill can be seen to the south-west at a distance of 75 miles, the Rajmahal hills to the north and the Panchet hill to the south-west. A large hemispherical mass of granite, six-feet high and thirty feet in circumference, has a flat-roofed temple on top and a masonry drain is built round it. It is called a Mahadeva temple.

The rocks in isolated blocks are first seen at Kachujor as one travels from Suri. At Dubrajpur these blocks become numerous.

half-buried in the ground. The houses of the villagers are found built in open spaces within such rocks. Several blocks are found placed one upon another at various inclinations, and the two most remarkable of these rocks, locally called Mama-bhagina, are perched on a 30 feet high boulder at a dangerous angle and rise above it to the height of 16 to 18 feet respectively. A larger block with a small hollow within was once used as a residence by a hermit. Near about, there are also a dozen blocks of the height of about 54 feet. On the highest of these rocks there are some circular masonry work, said to have been constructed by the manager of the Hetampur Estate in the 19th century for a change of air. He used to reach the top by a temporary wooden ladder.

At the base of the rocks to the west are the ruins of a temple of Mahadeva called Paharesw ar (the god of the hill). The block of stone, which is enshrined here as an emblem of the god, is said to have formerly been located on top of one of the rocks, and people standing at the base used to worship it. One day during a violent storm the main rock fell down and crushed a devotee to death. One Sankar Raj of Dubrajpur then erected a shrine over the fallen rock sensing a desire on the part of Siva to have a temple built for him there. Another legend says that the stone block representing the god on top of the rock came down for facilitating worship on the part of a devotee who grew old and could not go up to the top daily for worship. The stone block representing Siva appeared to him in dream and told him of his wishes to come down for the benefit of the devotee. There is a *Nāt mandir* in front built by one Kenaram Datta of Dubrajpur about 50 years ago in fulfilment of the vow taken earlier that he would raise a temple of Siva if he was blessed with a child.

Regarding the origin of the rocks legend says that when Ramachandra was about to attack Ravana, the King of Ceylon he had to make a bridge over the sea between India and Ceylon by throwing stone in the water. For this purpose, stones were quarried and brought from the Himalayas in an aerial chariot. But when the chariot passed over Dubrajpur, the horses tilted the chariot, and as a result, some of the stones fell out. Another legend says that the stones were then collected by Viswakarma at the command of Siva. Siva directed that the place should be made a second Kasi. When he had gathered the rocks and

was about to start work, it dawned and Viswakarma had to vanish keeping his work unexecuted. On one of the boulders a little to the east of Pahareswar temple there is a hollow which is said to contain water all the year round. It is said that Sita had once washed her head there, and since then the water is considered sacred. Closed by a place is shown to visitors as the place where Sita took her seat. A mark on a boulder is shown as the mark of the wheel of her aerial chariot.

The rocks on the whole are bare and devoid of vegetation and have very much been disintegrated owing to rain and heat.

About 5 miles south-west of Dubrajpur there are the ruins of a *garh* or mud-fort at Krishnanagar or Kishnanagar said to have been built by the Raja of Rajnagar as a residence for his queen. Two miles west of Dubrajpur there is a tank called Dantandighi said to have been excavated by Khagaditya Raja, who had a palace at the adjoining village Khagra which has a temple of Khageswar Siva. The tank derives its name from the goddess Danteswari located in a temple on its bank.

Ganutia — A village in Mayureswar police station, is situated on the north bank of the river Mor, 11 miles east of Sainthia railway station. It was an early centre of the silk industry in Birbhum, and had a big silk factory of the Bengal Silk Company towards the beginning of this century. The first factory was started here in 1786 by one Mr. Frushard. On his death, the factory was taken over by Mr. Cheap, the Commercial Resident, who died in 1828 and was buried here. Mr. Shakespeare then took over charge as Commercial Resident and continued till 1835 when the manufacture of silk by the East India Company stopped. The Collector then took over the estate and managed it as a khas mahal till it was purchased by the Bengal Silk Company.

Ghurisa — A village in Ilambazar police station, it is situated 7 km. west of Ilambazar. A very big village, it has ruins of old-time brick-built houses and several hundreds of silted up tanks speaking of its past glory. At one time it was a great centre of Sanskrit learning, specially in *Nyāya*. Mahamahopadhyaya Chatuspathi, a Sanskrit school (tol), founded in 1877, is still there teaching different branches, including *Nyāya* and *Vyākaraṇa*, of Sanskrit learning.

There are sixteen temples here of which two are worth mentioning. The Raghunathji temple near the Sanskrit school was built near about A.D. 1633 by one Acharya Raghuttama in token

of love for Lord Rama and is decorated with terracotta tiles of figures and designs. The temple is of the thatched-cottage type and the figures are based upon Hindu mythology. This is one of the earliest examples of brick-built temples and does not have scenes of European life so very common in later temples to be seen in this part of the district. It is said that a gold image of Rama was removed from the temple by the Maratha raiders (*bargis*) between A.D. 1742 and 1751 and since then no other idol has been installed there. Naturally, no worship is now carried on there. The nine-towered (*navaratna*) temple of Gopala Lakshmi Janardanji stands very near to the Raghunathji temple. It was founded by Kshetranath Datta, a *Gandhavanik* by caste, who traded in lac with the European merchants living in Ilambazar. From its execution the temple appears to have been built towards the middle of the 19th century. It has many terracotta plaques depicting European life, though scenes from Hindu mythology are not wanting.

Hetampur — A village (J.L. No. 143) in Dubrajpur police station, is situated 14 miles to the south-west of Suri. It has the residence of Raja Rama Ranjan Chakravarti Bahadur, the owner of the former Hetampur Raj. The founder of the Raj family Sri Muralidhar Chakravarti was a *Srotriya Brāhman*. His grandson Radha Nath collected a huge fortune and purchased the Hetampur property in 1796 presumably on the sale of the estate of the Raja of Birbhum. Raja Rama Ranjan succeeded to the estate in 1862 when he was 11, and the estate continued to be managed by the Court of Wards during his minority. He got the titles of Raja in 1874 and Raja Bahadur in 1877, the latter owing to his munificence during the famine of 1874. He built a college, a High School, a Sanskrit *tol* and a charitable dispensary there for the benefit of the villagers and they still cater to their needs. There are some rice mills here.

Itanda — A village (J.L. No. 155) in Bolpur police station, it is situated about 11 km. south-east of Bolpur, *via* Muluk between the rivers Kana Ajay and Ajay. It has a richly decorated temple of the early 19th century which is of the *Jor-Bānglā* type. The temple has profuse terracotta decorations depicting *Daśavatāra* and *Daśamahāvidyā* sequences along with vegetational motifs. It is said that some 200 years ago the site of the temple housed a band of robbers known as the *Hāḍkātā* group. They were the worshippers of Kali and founded this temple. A Pathan leader

named Joral Khan, however, defeated them in a fight. Later, a local *Sunri* family took possession of the temple. At present no worship takes place in the temple and there is no deity within. There are also two other decorated Siva temples, one of which, built about A.D. 1828, has terracotta plaques similar to those on the *Jor-Bāṅglā* temple.

Ilambazar — A village (J.L. No. 95) in the police station of the same name, it is situated 39 km. south-east of Suri and 20 km. south-west of Bolpur on the bank of the river Ajay which forms the boundary between Birbhum and Burdwan districts. Once the village was very posperous having lac and indigo factories, brass work, *tussar* silk and cotton weaving industries, but now it is decaying. A class of Hindu artisans called *Nuris* were traditionally engaged in lacquer craft here and formerly they used to manufacture women's bangles (*Churis*), dolls and toys, imitation fruits, ornament boxes, lac-dye (*āltā*) etc. In 1924, one of these artisans was appointed at Sriniketan for imparting training in this craft to the apprentices there. But most of these families in the village have now turned goldsmiths. The reasons for the extinction of this cottage industry may be the manufacture of dolls and toys of synthetic substitutes, which are available at cheaper rates. The following tools are used in the craft: (1) an earthen receptacle with *sāl* wood charcoal; (2) three bamboo sticks of about one feet height each, tied to each other crosswise to place the receptacle on it; (3) flat-tipped wooden spoon; (4) a square flat piece of timber; (5) a blow-pipe made of bamboo; (6) a pair of tongs; (7) a knife with a blunt blade and a handle to drop lacquer. Lacquer sticks or thin slabs of different colour are first taken and placed on charcoal-fire. These are rotated continuously till they soften. Sticks or slabs are then taken out of the fire and different parts of human body, animal figures, fruits etc. are made with the help of fingers and then joined together to give a complete shape. The nose, eye-balls, ear-ornaments etc. are formed by drops of coloured lacquer. These tapes of coloured lacquer also form hair, moustache, eye-brows etc.

Joljol — A village (J.L. No. 74) in Bolpur police station, it has the temple of Kankali, a Sakta goddess. It is considered to be one of the 52 *piṭhasthānas* (sacred places) where a part of the dismembered body of Sati fell. The local goddess derives her name from the waist (*kāṅkal*) of Sati, which is said to have fallen here.

Karidhya — A big village (J.L. No. 106) in Suri police station, situated about a mile west of Suri, can be reached by bus from Suri. The population here numbered 4,490 in 1961. It was once famous for *tussar* weaving and now has a lingering trade in *tussar*. Most of the weavers work for Visva-Bharati on wage rate, the latter supplying the raw materials. The village has also a large number of goldsmiths. It is said that the Senas of the village were the exchangers of Kaḍi, the old time currency during the rule of the Nawabs. It is supposed that the name of the village has been derived thus: Kaḍi>dihi Kaḍi>dihā Karidhya. There are also a number of temples in the village built not earlier than the mid-18th century. They have no terracottas, but are illustrative of styles, especially of the sharply executed cornices.

Kachujor — A village (J.L. No. 130) in Suri police station, situated 6½ miles south of Suri on the west of Suri-Raniganj road. It is said that the name of the village has been derived from Kachchika Devi, the village deity. The legend says that long before the advent of the Muslims there lived a line of Brahmin kings belonging to the Rarhi class and using the surname *Rai*. Rudracharan Rai was one of the most powerful kings of this class. About a quarter mile to the north-east of the village Rudracharan used to live in a well-protected palace at a place now called Rajabera. Kachchika Devi, having no image, stands at this place. She is considered to be a *tāntrik* deity. A number of old tanks named Deb Bund, Timichi, Kanchala, Mandal khan etc. are to be found in the village.

Ruins of houses lie scattered in the village, and the remains of ruined temples of Kali and Gopal are to be found in Arabhangali, a neighbouring village. It is said that the Maratha raiders (*Bargis*) sacked the village in A.D. 1744 and the local chieftain deserted the place.

Pottery and painting are the two notable home industries of the village.

Kanakpur — A village (J.L. No. 109) with an area of 1,564.33 acres, is situated 5 miles west of Murarai Railway station on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway in Murarai P.S. It can be reached from the station by rickshaw along a non-metalled road, jeepable only in fair weather. According to the 1961 Census there are 916 persons in the village. There are two temples here, situated side by side, dedicated to goddess *Aparājitā* and Siva respectively. Goddess *Aparājitā*, the presiding deity

of the village, is an old deity. The present temple was constructed by Harabansi Barman, a Zamindar of Kanakpur. Before that, the deity was placed in an old temple at a distánt place, renovated by king Udaynarayan. That temple is in ruins now. Afterwards she lived in the Siva temple of Ramnath Bhaduri till the new temple was constructed. The village was within the *zamindāri* jurisdiction of king Udaynarayan. There is a vast land called *Mundamālār Maṭh* or *Muḍmuḍe dāṅgā* to the west of the village, where the famous battle of Jagannathpur was fought between Udaynarayan and Murshidkuli Khan in A.D. 1714. In that battle the king Udaynarayan was made captive by the Nawab's army. To the east of the field there was the fort of Jagannathpur. *Samandir Saheber Darga* is situated in the fort. There are remains of another fort called *Birkhyatirgarh* at Birkiti, a village very near Kanakpur and situated to the west of Jagannathpur fort, on a high mound. On the west of Birkiti another village, Debinagar, is situated, which is said to have been the capital of king Udaynarayan. On the north of Kanakpur there is a village called Mallaipur. There are two ditch-like tanks, called *Malladaha* and *Maynākunda* respectively to the east and west of Mallaipur. A heap on the southern bank of *Malladaha* is locally known as the ruins of the temple of Goddess Malleswari.

After Udaynarayan, the zamindari went to Raghunandan of Natore. One Ramnath Bhaduri came there as a caretaker of the estate, who worked under the Nawabs of Murshidabad. The ruins of his residential building is still visible and locally called the palace of Bhaduri Raja He did many things for the development of the village Kanakpur. Under his patronage the village roads were constructed. He also dug many tanks and constructed bathing *ghāts*. Legend runs that he and his family committed suicide in a tank locally known as '*Lādubi*' which is still pointed out by the villagers. He did so out of fear of torture by the Maratha raiders (*bargis*). Ramnath Bhaduri was considered a very religious person in the district. The temple of *Bhandiśwar* Śiva at Bhandirban in Suri polic station was also constructed by him, and he granted a *devottar* estate in the name of Bhandiswar.

Kenduli — A village also called Kendu-Bilwa or Jayadeva-Kenduli in Bolpur police station, is situated on the north bank of the river Ajay, a few miles west of Ilambazar and about 22

miles south of Suri. It is known as the birth-place of the Sanskrit lyric poet Jayadeva of 12th century A.D. who happened to be the court-poet of Lakshmanasena, the king of Gauḍa. Jayadeva composed the famous lyric 'Gitagovindam' in praise of Radhika and Krishna. Legend says that one day while composing his poem Jayadeva came upon a line in which Krishna had to ask Radha to place her foot on his head. As a true Hindu he could not write this passage, and he mused on it and then left for taking bath. Meanwhile, Krishna appeared in the guise of Jayadeva, took meals from Jayadeva's wife Padmavati, and completed the line which Jayadeva could not. When the real Jayadeva returned, everything became clear and the couple was convinced that it was god himself who had saved Jayadeva from his predicament.

Jayadeva's body, which was burned after his death, still lies in a tomb here. A square piece of stone is also shown as the seat used by Jayadeva at the time of worship. There is also a temple here called Radha-Benode temple or Jayadeva's temple built by the mother of Maharaja Kirtichand Bahadur of Burdwan in A.D. 1683. This *Nava-ratna* (nine-towered) temple is said to have been raised on the site of Jayadeva's house, and its facade is decorated with terracottas depicting the incarnations of Vishnu and scenes from the Ramayana. Though the presiding deities of the temple are Radha and Krishna, there is no scene on the life of Radha and Krishna depicted on it. Terracottas depicting Mahisasuramardini and other gods and goddesses are to be found in the temple.

A big fair is held here in memory of Jayadeva on the day of *Poush Samkrānti* every year. Large numbers of people visit the fair, the main attraction of which is the congregation of *Bauls* from distant places who sing and dance in praise of their *maner manush* (man of the heart).

Khustigri — A village (J.L. No. 17) in Ilambazar police station, is situated 12 miles south of Suri. It is said that a Muslim saint, Saiyad Shah Abdullah Kirmani, when young, left his home in Kirman in Persia, and met Shah Arzani, a Muslim saint in A.D. 1630 at Patna during the reign of Shah Jahan. The latter asked him to go to Bengal gave him a tooth-pick of Chambeli-wood and told him to put up at that place where he found the tooth-pick became fresh and green. He arrived in Birbhum and stayed at Bargaon, near Bhedia where he performed miracles (*Keramat*). He then went to Khustigri, where after his stay overnight, he

found the tooth-pick fresh and green. He then planted it, and soon it grew up into a tree. He had great powers over serpents and his name is uttered in formulas of enchantment. He has a *dargah* in the village which is visited by pilgrims.

Labhpur — A village (J.L. No. 101) in the police station of the same name, it has an N.E.S. Block and other rural offices, hospital, schools etc. It is considered to be a *piṭhasthān* being one of the 52 spots where portions of the body of Sati fell when it was dismembered by Vishnu. It is said that Sati's lips fell here, and the temple of goddess Phullara has been constructed on the spot. There is a large dried up lake named Daldali near by and the legend says that this is the Devi Daha of the Ramayana from where Ramachandra got the blue lotuses for the worship of Durga.

Margram — The biggest village (J.L. No. 138) in Rampurhat police station in terms of population (11,568 in 1961) in the district, is situated on the river Dwarka, and is 4 miles east of Rampurhat with which it is connected by a metalled road. Before the opening of the railway, it was a trading town being situated on the confluence of the Dwarka and the Bhagirathi. Along with the adjacent villages of Baswa and Bishnupur, it is the centre of an indigenous silk spinning and weaving industry. At present about 250 families are engaged in weaving and spinning though they suffer from financial stringencies, their earnings being mainly based on making-charges. The general rate of making a cloth of normal length is about 12-16 rupees. They are able to make about 12-15 feet of cloth a day. There is a big building, dilapidated uninhabited in the village, which is said to be the residential building of one Dewan Chand, a dewan in the court of Sirajuddaula. There are four Samadhis (graves) of *Sha Garib-Ulla-Biaban, Sha-Madar, Sha-Karamuddin* and of *Jafar Khan Gazi* situated respectively on the West, South, North and East of the village. Jafar Khan Gazi's *dargah* (locally called *Budapeer-tala*) deserves special mention. Inside the *dargah* there is a hidden stone which is called the *Mandaveśwar* Siva. Only the top of this stone is visible. Hindu devotees worship this Siva on some religious occasions, specially during *Chaḍak* Festival, and a fair is held there at that time. Besides, three more fairs are held in the village, one in the Bengali month of *Paush* at *Budapeertala* and two on the occasion of other festivals.

According to Muslim beliefs, the name of the village is derived from *Mand-gram* or *Kadamrakkha,* the place where the Gazi

(Jafar Khan) set his foot first. Others say, it came from the name of the sage *Mandavya*, who was the founder of the village. Still others say that there was a caste named *Madava* in this village in ancient times, from which the name has been derived.

According to some legends, in ancient times this place was covered by dense forests, and there was an *āśrama* of a sage named *Mandavya* there. That place is now called *Gutingerghat*, situated on the Dwarka to the south of the village. Later, one *Fakir* Sha Madar came there and founded his *astana*. Then the place took a new name, *Fakirbagan*. Afterwards, a legendary king Manpati Singh came there and founded a township near the *āśrama* of Mandabya. In course of time this township became prosperous and largely populated, and was named after the sage Mandabya as Mandabyapur. There is no historical reference to the king, except some legends attached to some places, namely three tanks named after his wife and daughters; the *Mandaveśwar* Siva, worshiped by the king. *Devadanga* believed to be the place of the king's Palace; and *Fansitala*, believed to be the hanging place of criminals. Legend also says that later one Jafar Khan Gazi *alias* Mohammad Hossain came there from Delhi and killed Manpati Singh in a war and captured the village. Afterwards the Gazi was also killed by a legendary king of another place, named Binod, in a war. The Gazi's head was kept at Triveni (in Hooghly) and his body was buried in the grave at Madgram. Besides, one more legend is there referring to the sage Mandabya. A popular legend known as "*Sati-Muni-Bisambad*" also tells the story of an aristocratic harlot Lakshaheera and a chaste housewife of a Brahman.

Mahammad Bazar — A village (J.L. No. 125) in the police station of the same name, is situated 7 miles to the north of Suri. It is connected by bus services with Suri, Rampurhat etc. There are a number of old tanks, buildings and mosques in the village. There are some quarries of Kaolin or China-clay here. The earliest iron works of the district was located here where pig-iron used to be manufactured from iron-ores and then exported to other places. The village is fast developing along with the neighbouring area centring upon its mineral resources. There is an N.E.S. Block office here along with other usual offices, schools, hospital etc.

A new industrial township named Patelnagar, carved out of the villages named Rajyadharpur (J.L. No. 129), Kharia (J.L. No. 145) and Komarpur (J.L. No. 128), has been built here with the

aid obtained from Patel Memorial Fund. There are plants of China-clay-Kaolin and Ossery, works of fire-bricks and ceramics and mines of china-clay here. The Patelnagar Minerals and Industries Private Ltd. produces fire-clay. The raw materials are brought from the mines at Mouza Kharia, within 300 yds. of the factory. The value of the stock of minerals there is about Rs. 5.36 lakhs, while the value of annual sales is about Rs. 19 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs. Govinda Ceramics, a lessee of Patelnagar Fire-bricks and Potteries Ltd. is a small-scale industry located in Patelnagar. It is functioning since 1960. It produces mainly porcelain insulators and other electrical accessories which have a market in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere. Raw materials are obtained from the neighbourhood and also from outside. It transacts business to the extent of Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 6 lakhs a year.

There are also china-clay and black stone quarries in the neighbouring villages.

Makhdumnagar — A village (J.L. No. 33) in Mahammad Bazar police station, is the seat of a Pir (muslim saint) named Makhdum Saiyad Shah Jahiruddin. A man of the 16th century, it is said that he married in the Nawab family of Gauḍ. He could cure diseases, and even now people visit the place hallowed with his memory to get relief from diseases.

Mallarpur — A village (J.L. No. 22) in the Mayureswar police station of the Rampurhat subdivision. It lies south-west of the Mallarpur Railway station on the Sahibganj Loop line of the Eastern Railway which intersects the village from south to north. It is almost an hour's journey from Rampurhat Railway station by bus. It has the legend that Mallarpur was once the capital of some person bearing the title Malla which has, however, no connection with the famous Mallas of the Bankura district. It is said that the son, born of the unmarried daughter of a shepherd, Damumeph by name, of the neighbouring village Fatehpur, was called Mallanath. Mallanath by divine fortune became very rich, took the title of Raja. The Final Settlement Report of the Mallarpur Estate of 1893-94 observes that the village derives its name from Mallar Singh who was its original proprietor. It was a permanently settled estate and according to the Revenue Survey of 1851 it consisted of 23,410 acres of land. The fiscal history of the estate says that after the death of Mallar Singh, it fell into the hand of Raja Baj Basanto of Maluti who lived in Damra. But a *Pathan* Raja of Nagar invaded the estate,

killed its king and took in his possession the whole tract with unlimited sway. The successor of the *Pathan* king, Assor Juman Khan sold the pargana to one Babu Kishto Ram Bose of Calcutta who, being unable to manage the estate sold it to the Maharaja of Burdwan. The Maharaja first granted a *patni* lease of the estate to one Mathura Nath Mullick, but on his default he resumed the *khas* possession of the estate. After some time the Maharaja let it out in *ijara* to one Nanda Lal Babu of Burdwan. On the expiration of the term of the *ijara* in 1846, the Maharaja again let out the estate (exclusive of a portion known as jungle mahal) in *patni* taluk to Uma Sundari Dassya and Kshetra Kumari Bibi at a yearly rental of Rs. 25,000. But the latter gave a *darpatni* lease of her 8 annas share in the taluk to Uma Sundari Dassya who agreed to pay her Rs. 1,000 as profit, besides the rental payable by her to the Maharaja for her 8 annas share. Thus Uma Sundari Dassya became the sole proprietor of the taluk which she held for 26 years (1846-1872). In 1872 Uma Sundari Dassya sold her *patni* and *darpatni* right to Mohunt Gopal Das. The western part of the pargana, known as jungle mahal did not form part of the *patni* and *darpatni* lease of Uma Sundari Dassya. It was then held as a separate *patni* taluk by one Kedar Nath Mitra whose interest in it was sold in execution of a decree against him and purchased by Mohunt Gopal Das in 1876 for Rs. 7,000, the rent payable to the Maharaja being Rs. 3,232. Thus the Mohunt Gopal Das became the possessor of both the *patni* and *darpatni* right of the Mallarpur estate.

The present Mallarpur village occupies an area of 1,310 acres of land and according to 1961 Census, contains a population of 3,074 persons of which 1,516 are females. It is a big village, watered by the Dwarka. The village is famous for the old shrine of the Malleswara Siva (*anādi-liṅgam*), situated to its north. In the compound of the shrine there is a number of smaller temples, each containing a *liṅgam* including the shrine of goddess Siddheswari. Some terracotta plaques can be found scattered on the temples. There are three religious fairs held on the occasion of the *Māghi purṇimā*, *Śiva-chaturdaśi* and on the day before the *Chaitra Saṁkrānti*. The village has a Higher Secondary school, a High school for girls and two primary schools. It holds a *hat* every Wednesday and Saturday, besides a daily bazar. It has also got a post office, library and dispensary. The village is electrified.

Muluk — A village (J.L. No. 121) 3 km. east of Bolpur in Bolpur police station, is the seat (*Sripat*) of Sri Ramkanai Thakur, a well-known Vaishnava savant. Ramkanai was the grandson of the youngest brother of Dhananjoy Pandit, who was one of the twelve associates of Sri Chaitanya. It is said that once while on way to Vrindavan, Ramkanai Thakur became very tired and stopped near a jungle at this spot. This spot seemed to him to be the real Vrindavan. He then built a temple here collecting money from donors and the local milkmen gifted the land on which the temple was built. They also gifted some more land on which a fair is held still now. The then Nawab of Rajnagar in Birbhum also donated him 360 bighas of land in Mouza Chak Bhatura. The presiding deities of the temple are Krishna and Radhika, other deities of the temple are Hanuman, Narugopal, Salgramsila and Sri Chaitanya. Daily worship is carried on in the temple and *prasad* made of sixteen seers of rice is distributed among devotees daily. The distribution of prasad is called *Sadabrata Annadan*.

A fair is held here on the occasion of *Goshthashtami* on the 8th day of the full-moon period of October-November (*Sukla astami* of the Bengali month of Kartik) every year. It is called 'mela of Ramkanai' or 'mela of Muluk'. It continues for five days, *baul* songs and *kirtan* songs are sung by devotees and other Vaishnavite festivals are held on the occasion. The village has also four Siva temples of Aparajita Durga.

Murarai — A village (J.L. No. 104) in the police station of the same name, it has a railway station on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway. It is a centre of the local rice trade.

Nagari — A village (J.L. No. 189) in Suri police station, is 5 miles west of Suri. An annual fair called *Brahmadaitya mela* is held here every year. A tree, said to be haunted by the ghost of a Brahman, in the fair attracts people who lift a handful of earth from one place and drop at another as a form of worship to the *Brahmadaitya*. They do so expecting cure from diseases or fulfilment of a wish.

Nalhati — A non-municipal town and village (J.L. No. 53) in the police station of the same name, is situated to the north-east of the Rampurhat subdivision. It has an area of 1,642.96 acres with a population of 8,663 according to 1961 Census. It has a railway station on the Sahibganj loop line of the Eastern Railway, and a branch line runs to Azimganj from here.

The place is a centre of trade in rice, A new bazar having sprung up round the station half a mile from the old village. Manufacture of brass and bell-metal wares is also carried on here in a precarious condition.

Legend says that it was the capital of a Hindu monarch, Raja Nala, the ruins of whose palace are still traceable on a hillock close to the town called Nalhati Zila, where also a sanguinary battle is said to have been fought between the Raja and the conquering Musalmans.

The place is said to derive its name from king Nala. A popular tradition says that it is so called because the *nala* or throat of Sati fell here when Vishnu cut her off bit by bit from Siva's shoulders. Still another legend states that it was the *lalāt* or forehad of Sati that fell here. However, the village is considered to be a *pithasthān*, i.e., one of the 52 places where parts of Sati's body fell. There is a temple on the fort of a hillock, known as Lalateswari temple, where the presiding deity is goddess Lalateswari, a form of Sakti. Below the hillock there is a cold-spring of hygienic value, and a spot on the hillock is shown as bearing foot prints of Sita of the Ramayana fame.

Nanur — A village in the police station of the same name, and also called Chandidas-Nanur, it is 20 km. north-east of Bolpur. It can be reached by bus from Bolpur or Suri. It is known as the birthplace of Chandidas, the Vaishnava lyric poet of the 14th century A.D. There is a mound to the north of the village near the temple of Basuli or Bisalakshi worshipped by Chandidas. It is said that the residence of Chandidas was also located there. A portion of the mound was excavated by the University of Calcutta about two decades back. On excavating five occupational levels could be traced, of which the lowest belonged to the Gupta Age. Apart from bricks and pottery, some gold coins were also unearthed. One coin displayed the figure of a soldier on one side, and the figure of a deity in *padmāsana* on the other.

The name of Chandidas signifies association with Chandi, a Sakta goddess and Basuli, to whom he was devoted, is also a *tāntrik* goddess. But in fact Chandidas was a Vaishnavite and there are legends speaking about the conversion of Chandidas to Vaishnavism from Saktaism. It is said that one day Chandidas saw a beautiful flower floating on the river where he had gone to take a bath. He took it up and went to worship his own deity Bisalakshi with it. The goddess then appeared in

person and asked Chandidas to put the flower on her head and not at her feet, because her master Krishna had been worshipped with it. On hearing this Chandidas changed his faith and became a Vaishnavite.

Chandidas has immortalized Rami, washerwoman in his love lyrics and songs. A stone-plank kept to the west of a tank named Dantan is shown as the plank on which Rami used to wash clothes. There are several Siva temples in the village, two on the opposite of the Bisalakshi temple, and five behind these two. Near about there are another row of four small *char-chala* Siva temples and a solitary *at-chala* Siva temple.

A big fair called Chandidas-mela is held here on the full-moon day of Phalgun (February-March) on the occasion of Doljatra festival every year. The fair commences through a worship of the goddes Bisalakshi and lasts for about a month. It is interesting to note that in lower Nanur water is available at a depth of 10′ to 12′.

Paikar — A village (J.L. No. 76) in Murarai police station, it can be reached from Murarai railway station on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway. On the way one has to cross the villages Bhadiswar and Gopalpur. A festival called 'Banbrata' takes place in Paikar on Sri Panchami day (in February) every year. On the eve of Saraswati puja, Siva and Kali, two other deities of the village are worshipped with great pomp. There are a number of archaeological remains in this village. There are two epigraphs here — one of Karnadeva, the king of Kalchuris and the other of Vijayasena. The two pillars having the epigraphs might have had some icons on them which are broken now. The polish and finish of the pillar of Karnadeva made of black basalt stone from the Rajmahal hills indicates that the artists belonged to Bengal and not to Chedi country. The inscription engraved on it is not central Indian script, but in the Proto-Bengali characters prevalent in North-east India. Karnadeva's inscription illuminates a perior of the history of Bengal in the 11th century A.D. when the Pala suzerainty was about to dwindle. But still Karnadeva could not subjugate the Bengal rulers, rather he came to terms with Vigrahapala by marrying his daughter with him. The temple of Budo Siva of Paikar is a veritable museum accommodating icons of many gods and goddesses. It may be that Brahmanism, Vaishnavism, Saivism held sway in this part along with Buddhist and Hindu Tantricism in the past.

Pakurhans — A village (J.L. No. 68) in Nanur police station, it is about 3 km. east of Nanur (Chandidas-Nanur) from which it can be reached on foot.

There is a class of people here called *Patuas* who have embraced Islam, but who appears originally to have belonged to the semi-Aryanised sub-castes of Hindus. They call themselves *Poto-Mal* or *Poto-Mussalman*. Belonging to an almost endogamous Muslim community, at present 10 or 11 such families of *patuas* live in the village. Their principal means of livelihood is agriculture, but still some of them show *pats* (pictures) of Jamraja, Ramlila, Savitri Satyaban, milkmaids etc., all belonging to Hindu epic and mythology and collected from elsewhere. They do not, however, draw (pictures) themselves now, which their ancestors did several decades ago. They then used to paint on walls and earthen jars and pots and make idols of Hindu gods and goddesses at other places. Though very much Muslim in their custom and practice, they take Hinduised names and titles like, Monoranjan Chitrakar (alias Manmatha Patua), Dukori Patua, Anukul Patua, Inupada Patua etc.

Pathar Chapri — A village (J.L. No. 216) in Suri police station, it was the abode of Shah Mahbub, a Muslim saint, locally known as Data Sahib who died approximately in A.D. 1892. He had miraculous powers with which he could cure persons suffering from serious diseases. He used to treat patients by applying ashes or grass, and himself could remain under water throughout the year. His tomb, located here, is still visited by many.

Phulbera — A village in Dubrajpur police station. It has the temple of Danteswari, said to be one of the 52 *pithas* (sacred places) where parts of the dismembered body of Sati fell. It is said that Sati's teeth fell here as the name of the goddess implies.

Rajnagar or Nagar — A village (J.L. No. 38) in the police station of the same name, it is situated 15 miles west of Suri. It has an N.E.S. Block office, and other usual offices, schools, health centre etc. It was the capital of the Hindu and Pathan Rajas of Birbhum prior to and following the Muslim conquest in the 13th century A.D. It is not exactly known if Lakhnor of the old times can be identified with Rajnagar, though controversies have been raised on this point. It is, however, certain that the place was an important seat of administration of the Muslim rulers (*jagirdars*) of those days. Once a prosperous area, the place is now full of crumbling houses, mosques etc. One can

still see the old *imambara, nahabatkhana* of the Hindu chieftains, the burial place of the Muslim overlords, the twelve-domed Matichor mosque all on three sides of the lake named Kalidaha here. Tradition says that the lake, excavated by the Hindu Rajas, was dedicated to Kali. The Kali image, located in the centre of the lake and surrounded by a wall, left the tank when it was polluted by the victorious Muslims. The lake-water overtopped the bank, and the Kali-image floated down the water till it reached the Khushkarni stream and then reached Birsinghpur.

It is said that the last home of the impoverished family of the Rajas was sold for debt in 1888, and the same year the titular Raja Muhammad Johar-ul-Zaman Khan, who succeeded in 1855, died a pauper. North of this place and about 4 miles away and buried in a heavy jungle are the ruins of a mud-fort, which is said to have been raised in the 18th century as a protective measure against Maratha inroads. This wall ran for a distance of 32 miles, was 12 to 18 feet in height with a broad ditch outside. The entrances to the town through the gateways were protected by the *ghātwāls* who enjoyed rent-free land for rendering service.

Rampurhat — Headquartars of the subdivision of the same name, it is situated in 24°10′ N latitude and 87°47′ E longitude, on the Sahibganj loop line of the Eastern Railway. The subdivision, including the town, was formerly a part of Murshidabad district and was transferred to Birbhum in 1873. According to the Census of 1971 the population of this municipal town is 23,749. It is situated on the western slope of an undulation overlooking the distant hills of the Santal Parganas. The railway has a locomotive depot here. It has all the usual government offices, hospitals, schools etc. that are to be found in a subdivisional town. The *hat* or market from which the town got its name was originally situated about half a mile south of the town on the main road but it has gradually spread over other areas. A terminus of buses for various routes is located near the railway station. It is a trade centre through which much of the trade of the Santal Parganas passes and it is also connected with Dumka, 40 miles away, by a pucca road. There is a hillock called Lalpahari to the west of the town from where stones were quarried to build the old buildings near Rampurhat and Mallarpur.

Sainthia — A village (J.L. No. 95) in the police station of the same name, it is situated on the Mor river and 11 miles to the east of Suri. It has a railway station of the Eastern Railway,

situated as it is on the junction of Sahibganj loop and Andal-Sainthia branch lines. Buses for Suri and other places can also be availed of from here. It is an important trade centre, has an N.E.S. Block office and other usual offices, schools, health centres and a college. The place consists of the villages, Debiganj and Nandipur of earlier times. These two villages were depopulated at one time owing to an attack of plague. Later a zemindar from Enḍedaha near Calcutta purchased the mahal and from then on the place became prosperous. The place is considered to be a *pithasthān* (a sacred place), being the seat of Nandikeswari. A small heap of soil covered with vermilion mixed in mustard oil is placed on a platform encircled by banyan and other trees. A small door-frame is placed on the outer side of a hollow there, and daily worship takes place at this place. A small temple of Siva, called Nandikeswar, is also there. On the full-moon day of the Bengali months of Poush and Baisakh people visiting the temples are entertained with *Prasad*. There are also a new Jain temple and three mosques. A fair called *Brahmadaityer* Mela is held on the last day of Poush.

Santiniketan — A mile away from Bolpur (Santiniketan) railway station on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway, it is a place originally selected by Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, the father of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, to practise religious meditation. Maharshi founded the Santiniketan Asram in 1862 after he had acquired the plot of land, built a hut and a temple for the purpose. In 1901 the poet Rabindranath started an experimental school known as *Brahmacharyasrama* here with only five students on the roll. The school was to provide a different kind of education in the lap of nature and in an atmosphere of freedom, mutual trust and joy. It was thus built on the model of the Tapovana school of ancient India. In 1912 an Association of ex-students called the Santiniketan Asramik Sangha was inaugrated to enlist public sympathy in the work of the Asram. In 1918 the name Visva-Bharati came into existence with the motto *Yatro Visvam bhavatyekanidam* (where the world makes its home in a single nest). From 1919 higher studies in Buddhist literature, Vedic and classic Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Jain, Zoroastrian and Islamic cultures were provided for by and by. Art and music courses were also there. The formal inauguration of the Visva-Bharati took place in December, 1921. It became an international university trying to develop a basis on which the cultures of the East and the West may meet in common fellowship.

The academic activities of Visva-Bharati were stimulated by the lectures of many distinguished professors from abroad. At Sriniketan the poet with the help of Leonard K. Elmhirst opened the Institute of Rural Reconstruction in 1922. In 1951 Visva-Bharati was declared to be an institution of national importance and was incorporated as a unitary, teaching and residential University by Act XXIX of 1951 of India. The university, however, started functioning from 1961, though inaugurated earlier.

Visva-Bharati, a co-educational residential university, has the following institutions and departments :

Patha-Bhavana (Higher Secondary School), Siksha-Bhavana (College of under-Graduate and Graduate studies), Vidya-Bhavana (College of Post-Graduate studies & Research), Kala-Bhavana (College of Fine Arts & Crafts), Sangit-Bhavana (College of Music & Dance), Vinaya-Bhavana (College of Teaching), Siksha-Charcha (Basic Teachers' Training school), Siksha-Satra (Higher Secondary School for rural children), Silpa-Sadana (Cottage Industry Training Section — at Sriniketan), Palli-Samgathana Vibhaga (Department of Rural Reconstruction — at Sriniketan), Granthana-Vibhaga (Publishing Department), Rabindra-Sadana (Tagore Museum & Academy), Agro-Economic Research Centre, the Visva-Bharati Central Library, and the Pearson Memorial Hospital.

Visva-Bharati publishes two quarterly journals, namely the Visva-Bharati quarterly (in English) and the Visva-Bharati Patrika (in Bengali). A monthly news letter named 'Visva-Bharati News' is also published. Some important fairs and festivals are also held every year in the premises of the university. For the lodging of visitors they have a Guest House.

Supur — A village (J.L. No. 113) in Bolpur police station, is six miles west of Bolpur. A French factory, which was opened here in 1768, was taken over by the British in 1792 when war broke out between England and France.

Tradition has it that it was the residence of a Hindu Zamindar named Raja Surath. There is a lingam here called Suratheswar which the Raja used to worship. He made 1,00,000 sacrifices (*Bali*) to Kali, and the place came to be called Balipur, whence the name Bolpur has been derived. Legend says that the Raja was very lecherous and one day he dreamt that he was accosted by the persons who had died in his hands. He then began to flee till a goddess appeared in his dream and asked him to lead a virtuous life. The goddess was Durga, and the king began to make sacrifices in her honour daily to appease her. When the king

was about to ascend to heaven, the ghosts of his victims barred his path. Durga appeared and told the king to atone for his crimes before he could be rewarded for his virtues. Saying this, Durga left. The former victims then beheaded the king, who, however, entered heaven afterwards.

Legend attaches to a tank in the vicinity. It is said that Gunapati Rai married his son to a Kulin girl. The Rais traced their descent from Ishwar Rai and Bhagwan Rai, two skillful physicians who had settled in the village. One day the Kulin girl had her ankles covered with mud when she went for a bath in the tank. Gunapati Rai then had a ghat constructed, from which a brick-built path went to his house for the convenience of his Kulin daughter-in-law.

Another legend is attached to what is known as Jak tank. A descendant of Bhagwan Rai had amassed huge wealth, but had no heir to whom the wealth could be bequeathed. He then determined to entomb a boy alive in a spacious place along with his treasures. He took hold of a parentless young boy and took him to the tomb. Before closing the door of the tomb the wealthy man asked the boy what the latter wanted to eat. He replied that he would like to have the first thing he saw in the morning. Next morning he found a young calf which he asked the wealthy man to kill and to give it to him. But the wealthy man could not comply with his request as he was a Hindu, whereupon the boy invoked severe curses on the man. The villagers associate the Jak tank with the said tomb. Another legend says that a pious Goswami named Ananda Chand lived here who fought the Maratha raiders (*bargis*) bravely when they attacked the village. He appeared in four places at once, mounted on a white charger.

Another story says that on hearing the miraculous powers of the Goswami a pious *Maulvi* appeared before the Goswami. The Maulvi came on a tiger. The Goswami asked him to sit on his bed and offered him a hookah. But soon after both the bed and hookah vanished in a flame of fire and the Maulvi saw himself seated on another bed. The Maulvi told everything to his men on returning to his own place. A sceptic went to the Goswami along with some pieces of beef as presents from the Maulvi. But as soon as the pot was uncovered, two large lotuses were found within it.

Ananda Chand then amassed much money as the properties of all childless Vaishnavas passed to him on their death.

Surul — A village (J.L.No.104) in Bolpur police station, it is situated three miles west of Bolpur and can be reached by bus or rickshaw from the latter. A commercial residency under one Mr. John Cheap was located here, but was abandoned after A.D.1835 when the East India Company gave up its mercantile activities. The ruins of Cheap's house, locally called Cheap *Saheber Kuthi*, are now to be found in Sriniketan within this village. There is a well-decorated *pancha-ratna* temple of Lakshmi-Janardana attached to the palace of the former Zamindar Biswambhar Roy here. The terracotta plaques of the temple indicate that it belongs to the 18th century. The style, though refined than that in the temple at Kenduli, shows liveliness and good composition. The panels of the archway are crowded with figures depicting the *durbar* of Ravana at Lanka to the right, the battle of Lanka in the centre and the enthronement of Rama to the left. A single series of smaller panels up and round includes the *daśavatāra of* Vishnu and many Krishnalila scenes. No bottom friezes are there. There are also two small *rekha* temples of Siva, dated 1753 *sakabda* (A.D. 1831), to the north of the Lakshmi-Janardana temple. The panels depict scenes of enthronement of Rama and Mahishasurmardini. There are also rows of women's faces depicted on medallion-like openings there. A little distance to the south-west there is another *rekha* temple of Siva of 1783 *sakabda* (A.D. 1861). The high frieze depicts Siva with Parvati nursing Ganesh while many attendants surround them. There are also some secular figures there in the lowest courses. There are other temples towards the north of the village — and they are in *chala, rekha* and *ratna* styles.

Suri — It is the district headquarters town, situated 2 miles south of the Mor river and 2 miles south-west of its railway station located on the Andal — Sainthia branch of the Eastern Railway. This municipal town, sprawling over an area of 3.7 sq. miles with a population of 22,841 (1961) includes mauzas named Araipur, Chandisahebganja, Suri, Nurai, Hatjanbazar, Sonator and Anandapur all within Suri police station. The town is situated on the eastern slope of a ridge running alongside the south bank of the Mor at the point where it subsides into the level country. The market area of the town is located at the crossing of the main thoroughfares in the heart of it, and to its north a dense cluster of houses and narrow lanes formed the nucleus of the urban area from old times. The new Mor project colony and the new college have added to the beauty and importance of the town.

A number of buses connect this town with different places in and outside the district.

A carved brick temple at Sonatorpara, known as Rasmancha or Radha-Damodar temple is a fine specimen of the late style of temple architecture in Bengal. It appears to belong to the late 17th or early 18th century. It contains scenes from the life of Krishna and represent other members of the Hindu pantheon. The terracotta carvings are made of *phulpathar* or *giripathar* of Dubrajpur. There is another temple called Rajaballavjiur mandir created in 1215 B.S. by one Krishnaram Babu of Calcutta. It is situated at Banipara. There are also Simhabahini and Bhabatarini temples here, the latter locally known as Suri Kalibadi.

The cemetery to the south of Barabagan has a tomb of John Cheap who had entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1782 and died in 1828. In Husainabad near the collector's residence a grassy mound is pointed out as the site of the summer-palace of *Bir Rajas*.

In the pre-British days Suri was a halting place on way to Rajnagar, the then capital of Birbhum from Murshidabad. At that time Birbhum was not separated from Murshidabad as a district. In 1787 Birbhum and Vishnupur were separated from Murshidabad to form a district. In 1809 was again amalgamated with Murshidabad, and the latter became the district headquarters. In 1820 Birbhum was again separated as a district, and Suri became the headquarters town. The district extended upto Deoghar, and the present Santal Parganas district was not born then, and the area was within Birbhum district.

To curb the Santal rebellion in A.D. 1855 arrangements were made from Suri. The army came marching from Burdwan, while at Tilbuni, six miles away from Suri, a Santal, Sidu Majhi by name, got ready to attack Suri with the help of Santals numbering between 5,000 and 7,000. The Santals took arms and got ready to attack in some other places. However, the rebellion came to a fiasco and that is another story.

Apart from the usual offices, schools and colleges, the following places having old associations may be mentioned :

Lalkuthi — At this place near the circuit house there was a stable in which horses were kept ready for the collectors of that time.

Fansidanga — At this place on Suri-Sainthia road there was gallows to hang persons condemned to death.

Anandapur — There was a police barrack here, which was shifted to the present site after the Santal rebellion.

Kendua-danga — This place adjacent to Vidyasagar college was selected as camping ground by Maratha raiders (*Bargis*). and the place was then called Murshidganj.

Circuit House — Built in A.D. 1806. It is probably the oldest government building in the district.

Dangalpara — Some old constructions here were perhaps the *kuthis* of *sahibs*.

Ramusingher bazar — There was a market formerly in the present Chandnipara. This was established by Ram Narain Sinha, the brother of Lord Sinha, and hence the name.

Rutipara — Formerly there were many factories making bread here, and hence the name.

Gurusaday Rangamancha — Built by Rai Bahadur Nirmal Shib Banerjee in A.D. 1917 who was himself an actor.

Barabagan Mela — Since A.D. 1896 a big fair is hold here every year. Cattle show is its main attraction.

Tantipara — A village (J.L. No. 51) in Rajnagar police station of the Sadar subdivision, situated on Suri-Bakreswar road — one mile away from Bakreswar. It can be reached from Suri or Dubrajpur by bus. According to the 1961 Census there lived 3,759 persons here. It has all the rural institutions like Post office, primary schools, health centre, etc. Its fame rests on the weaving of *tussar* by weavers. Most of the households own weaving apparatus, and both cotton and *tussar* (silk) cloths are woven there, which are in great demand within the country and in foreign countries like the U.S.A. and Japan. The *mahajans* or middlemen advance wages and raw materials to them, but the wages are meagre. A co-operative society of weavers has recently been opened there to improve the economic condition of weavers.

Tarapith — A village, also called Chandipur (J.L. No. 62) and Tarapur within Rampurhat police station, can be reached by bus from Mallarpur and Rampurhat Railway stations on the Sahibganj loop of the Eastern Railway. It can also be reached from Tarapith Road Railway Station on the same line. A brick-built temple of goddess Tara and a big *śmaśān* (place for cremation of the dead bodies of Hindus) by the side of the river Dwarka are located here which are frequented by pilgrims. Legend says that the eye-ball of Sati fell here and hence it has become a *piṭh* so very sacred to Hindus. It is also said that the legendary sage Basistha worshipped Sati at this place. Another legend says that a businessman while going to Murshidabad took shelter near a mango-grove in village Chandipur as it became dark. The mango-

grove was situated at the foot of the hillock on which the present temple stands. He was a Saktā, but having lost his path he became unconscious when the goddess protected him from the attacks of jackals, dogs and other animals. The goddess then appeared to Rani Bhawani of Putiya in a dream, in whose zemindari the garden was located, and asked her to build a temple near the mango-grove in her honour. The traveller woke up crying "Tara" "Tara" next morning and the place came to be known as Tarapur. Born at Atla, a village about 2 miles away from this place, Bama Kshyapa, a great Tantric sage of the late nineteenth century attained supernatural qualities through his meditations at this place. Every year pilgrims gather here on the occasion of Taradevi puja or Chaturdasi mela in the Bengali month of Aswin (September-October), when a fair is held here, continuing for 10 days. In March also a fair is held during the festival of Baruni *snān*.

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